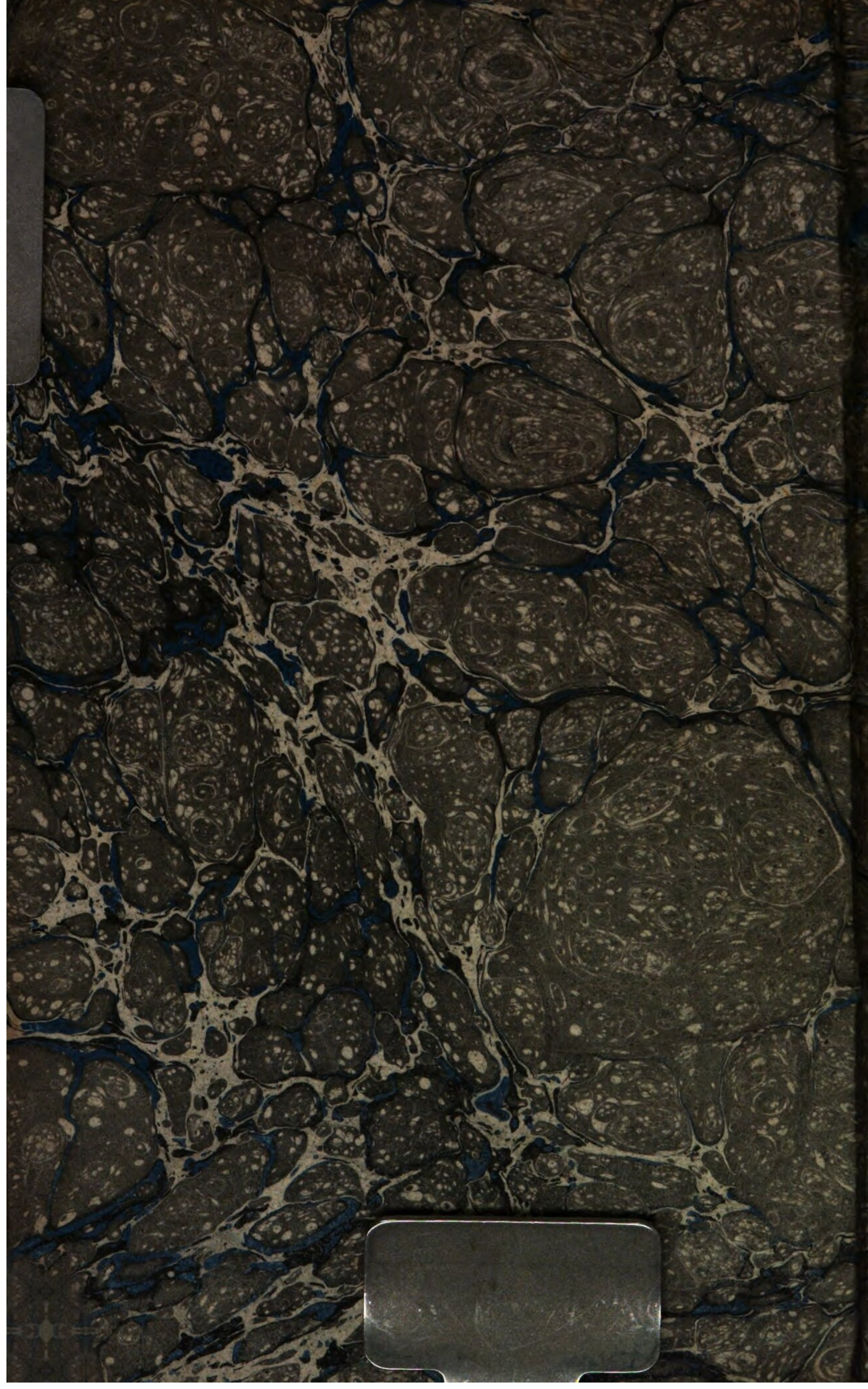
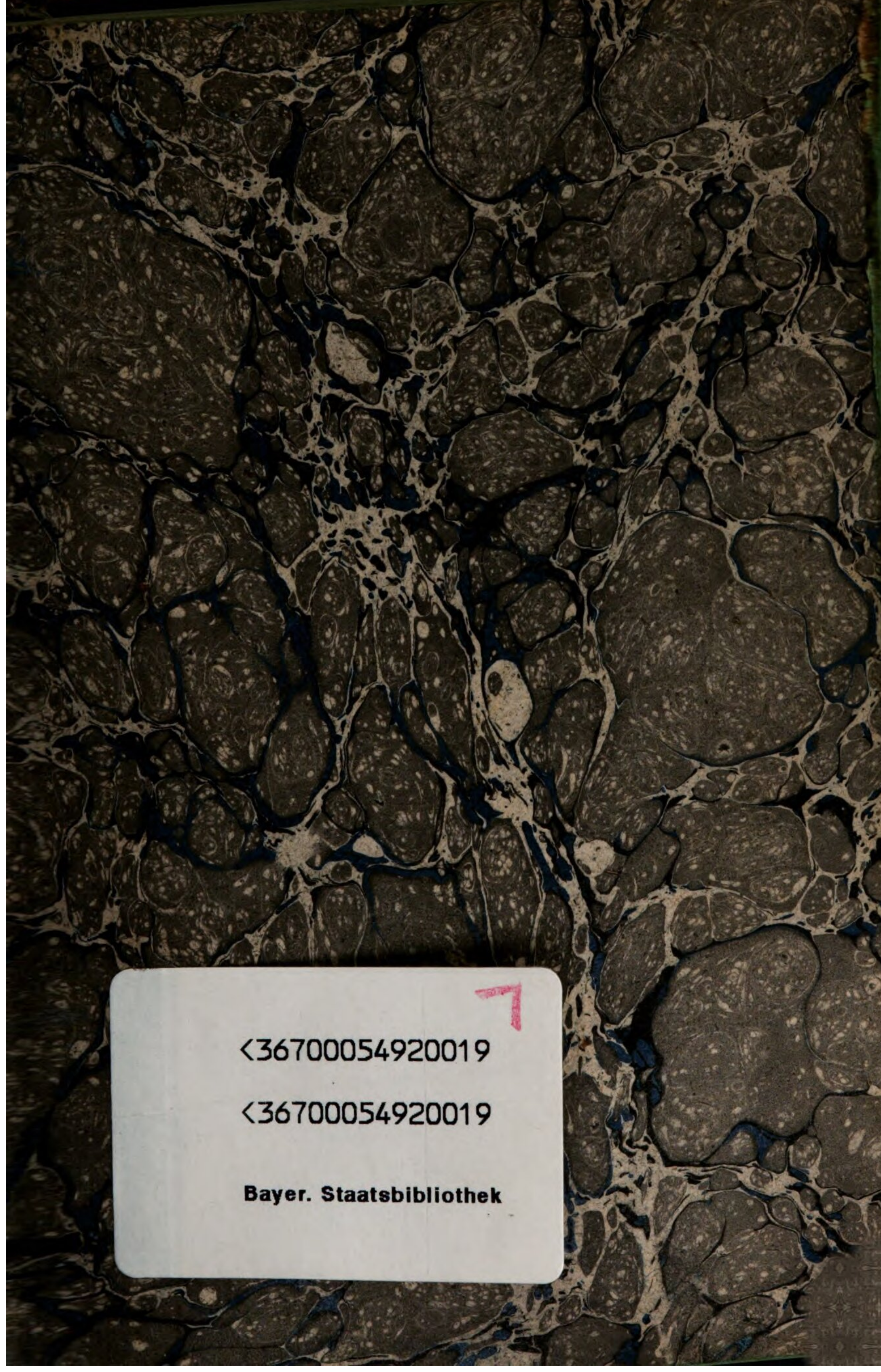


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SIR PHILIP SYDNEY'S
DEFENCE OF POETRY.

A N D,

OBSERVATIONS ON POETRY
AND ELOQUENCE,

FROM THE DISCOVERIES

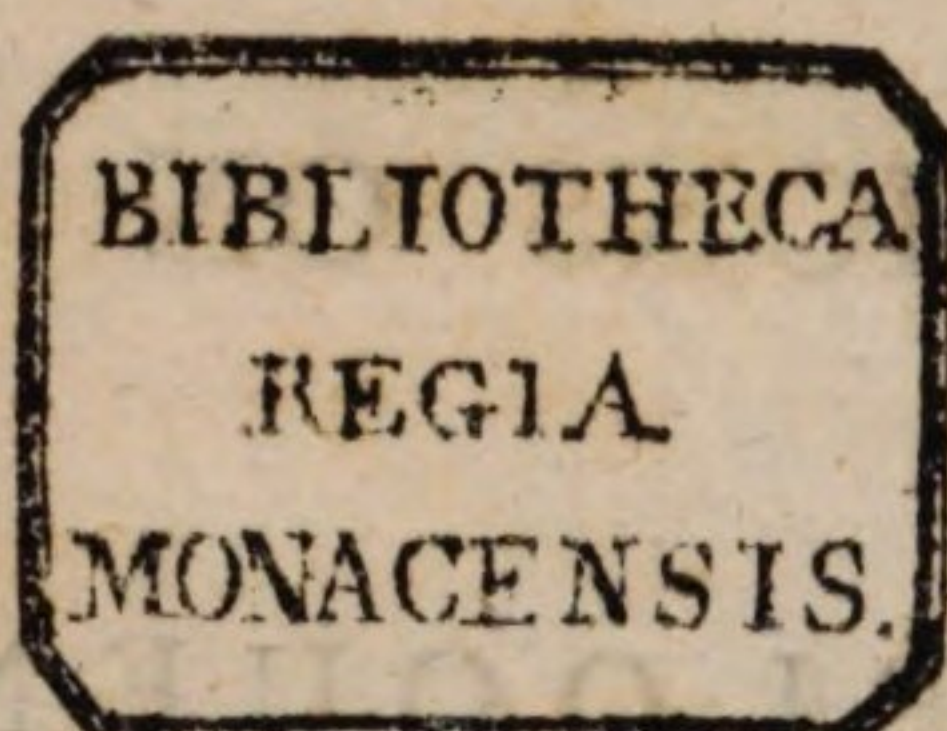
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MDCCLXXVII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Public has paid, of late, so much attention to our *old Poets*, that it has been imagined a perusal of some of our *old Critics* also may be found equally agreeable. Two pieces of criticism, accordingly, are here selected, of no common merit; and, indeed, the two earliest in our language that deserve much attention; but which are not sufficiently known and read, by the situation in which they happen to stand; the one at the end of so tedious and unnatural a Romance as the *Arcadia*; and the other at the end of *Ben Jonson's Works*; which, being very voluminous, and not all of equal value, fall not into many hands.

The characters of the two authors are too well known to require to be here displayed. Suffice it to say, that there are few rules and few excellencies of poetry, especially epic and dramatic, but what Sir *Philip Sydney*, who had diligently read the best Latin and Italian commentaries on *Aristotle's Poetics*, has here pointed out and illustrated with true taste and judgement; and that the observations of *Ben Jonson* have all that closeness and precision of style, weight of sentiment, and accuracy of classical learning, for which he is so justly celebrated. For the few antiquated expressions, in both pieces, no apology can be required.

rich our minds with the contemplation thereof,
 which he thought most precious. But with
 none, I remember, mine ears were so much

 new payment, or moved with our learner-like
 admiration) he excelled his speech in the praise
 of his faculty.

He said, Soldiers were the noblest class of
 mankind, and most noblest of soldiers.

He said, they were the masters of war, and of

managers of peace, they were the lords of
 the world, and the lords of the world.

He said, they were the lords of the world, and
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rich our minds with the contemplation therein, which he thought most precious. But with none, I remember, mine ears were at any time more loaden, than when (either angred with slow payment, or moved with our learner-like admiration) he exercised his speech in the praise of his faculty.

He said, Soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers. He said, they were the masters of war, and ornaments of peace, speedy goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in camps and courts: nay, to so unbelieved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince, as to be a good horseman: Skill of government, was but a *Pedanteria* in comparifon. Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless beast the horse was, the only serviceable courtier, without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage; and such more, that if I had not been a piece of a *Logician* before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse. But thus much, at least, with his no few words, he drove into me, That self-love is better than any gilding, to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties.

8.2 Wherein, if *Pugliano's* strong affection, and weak arguments, will not satisfy you, I will
give

give you a nearer example of myself; who, I know not by what mischance, in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipped into the title of a Poet, am provoked to say something unto you in the defence of that my unelected vocation; which if I handle with more good will, than good reasons, bear with me; since the scholar is to be pardoned that followeth the steps of his master.

And yet I must say, That as I have more just cause to make a pitiful defence of poor Poetry, which, from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children: so have I need to bring some more available proofs, since the former is by no man barred of his deserved credit, whereas the silly latter hath had even the names of *Philosophers* using to the defacing of it, with great danger of civil war among the Muses.

And first, truly, to all them that, professing learning, inveigh against Poetry may justly be objected, That they go very near to ungratefulness, to seek to deface that, which, in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little, enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges. And will you play the hedg-hog, that being received into the den, drove out his host?

or rather the vipers, that with their birth kill their parents?

Let learned *Greece*, in any of her manifest sciences, be able to shew me one book before *Musæus*, *Homer*, and *Hesiod*; all three nothing else but poets. Nay, let any history be brought, that can say any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the same skill, as *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and some others are named, who having been the first of that country that made pens deliverers of their knowledge to posterity, may justly challenge to be called their Fathers in learning. For not only in time they had this priority (although in itself antiquity be venerable) but went before them, as causes to draw, with their charming sweetness, the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as *Amphion* was said to move stones with his poetry to build *Thebes*, and *Orpheus* to be listened to by beasts, indeed stony and beastly people: So among the *Romans* were *Livius Andronicus*, and *Ennius*: So in the *Italian* language, the first that made it to aspire to be a treasure-house of science, were the poets *Dante*, *Boccace*, and *Petrarch*: So in our *English*; were *Gower*, and *Chaucer*; after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the same kind, as other arts.

This

This did so notably shew itself, that the *Philosophers* of *Greece* durst not a long time appear to the world, but under the mask of Poets: So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, and *Parmenides*, sang their natural philosophy in verses: So did *Pythagoras* and *Phocylides* their moral counsels: So did *Tyrtæus* in war matters, and *Solon* in matters of policy; or rather, they being poets, did exercise their delightful vein in those points of highest knowledge, which before them lay hidden to the world: For that wise *Solon* was directly a poet, it is manifest, having written, in verse, the noble fable of the *Atlantick* island, which was continued by *Plato*. And, truly, even *Plato*, who-soever well considereth, shall find, that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were Philosophy, the skin, as it were, and beauty, depended most of Poetry. For all stands upon *Dialogues*; wherein he feigns, many honest burgeses of *Athens* speaking of such matters, that if they had been set on the rack, they would never have confessed them: besides, his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacy of a walk, and interlacing mere tales, as *Gyges's Ring*, and others; which, who knows not to be flowers of poetry, did never walk into *Apollo's* garden.

And even *Historiographers*, although their lips
B 3 found

found of things done, and verity be written in their fore-heads, have been glad to borrow, both fashion, and, perchance, weight, of the Poets: So *Herodotus* intituled the Books of his history by the names of *The nine Muses*; and both he, and all the rest that followed him, either stole or usurped, of poetry, their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles which no man could affirm; or, if that be denied me, long orations, put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which, it is certain, they never pronounced.

So that, truly, neither *Philosopher*, nor *Historiographer*, could, at the first, have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great disport of Poetry; which in all nations, at this day, where learning flourisheth not, is plain to be seen: in all which, they have some feeling of Poetry. In *Turkey*, besides their law giving divines, they have no other writers but poets. In our neighbouring country *Ireland*, where, truly, learning goes very bare, yet are their poets held in a devout reverence. Even among the most barbarous and simple *Indians*, where no writing is, yet have they their poets, who make, and sing songs, which they call *Arentos*, both of their ancestors deeds, and praises of their gods. A sufficient probability, that if ever learning come among them, it must be

be by having their hard, dull wits softened and sharpened with the sweet delight of Poetry; for until they find a pleasure in the exercise of the mind, great promises of much knowledge, will little persuade them that know not the fruits of knowledge. In *Wales*, the true remnant of the antient *Britons*, as there are good authorities to shew the long time they had poets, which they called *Bards*, so through all the conquests of *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, some of whom did seek to ruin all memory of learning from among them, yet do their poets, even to this day, last; so as it is not more notable in the soon beginning, than in long continuing.

But since the authors of most of our sciences were the *Romans*, and, before them, the *Greeks*; let us, a little, stand upon their authorities, but even so far, as to see what names they have given unto this now scorned skill. Among the *Romans*, a poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words *Vaticinium*, and *Vaticinari*, is manifest; so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge! And so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the changeable hitting upon any such verses, great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed.

Whereupon grew the word of *Sortes Virgilianæ*; when, by sudden opening *Virgil's* book, they lighted upon some verse, as it is reported by many, whereof the histories of the *emperors* lives are full. As of *Albinus*, the governor of our Island, who, in his childhood, met with this verse,

Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis;
And in his age performed it. Although it were a very vain and godless superstition; as also it was, to think spirits were commanded by such verses: whereupon this word *charms*, derived of *Carmina*, cometh, so yet serveth it to shew the great reverence those wits were held in; and altogether not without ground, since both the oracles of *Delphi* and the *Sibyls* prophecies were wholly delivered in verses; for that same exquisite observing of number and measure in the words, and that high-flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet, did seem to have some divine force in it.

And may not I presume a little farther, to shew the reasonableness of this word *Vates*, and say, That the holy *David's* Psalms are a divine *Poem*? If I do, I shall not do it without the testimony of great learned men, both antient and modern. But even the name of Psalms, will speak for me, which being interpreted, is nothing but Songs: then, that it is fully written

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in metre, as all learned *Hebricians* agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly, and principally, his handling his prophecy, which is merely poetical. For what else is the awaking his musical instruments; the often and free changing of persons; his notable *Prosopopæias*, when he maketh you, as it were, see God coming in his majesty; his telling of the beasts joyfulness, and hills leaping; but a heavenly Poesy; wherein, almost, he sheweth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty, to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith? But, truly, now, having named him, I fear I seem to profane that holy name, applying it to Poetry, which is, among us, thrown down to so ridiculous an estimation. But they that, with quiet judgments, will look a little deeper into it, shall find the end and working of it such, as being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the church of God.

But now let us see how the *Greeks* have named it, and how they deemed of it. The *Greeks* named him ποιητήν; which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages; it cometh of this word ποιεῖν, which is *to make*: wherein, I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we *Englishmen* have met with the *Greeks* in calling him Maker! which name, how high
and

and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were known by marking the scope of other sciences, than by any partial allegation. There is no art delivered unto mankind, that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which, they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So doth the *Astronomer* look upon the stars, and by that he seeth set down what order nature hath taken therein. So doth the *Geometrician* and *Arithmetician*, in their diverse sorts of quantities. So doth the *Musician*, in times, tell you, which by nature agree, which not. The *natural Philosopher* thereon hath his name; and the *moral Philosopher* standeth upon the natural virtues, vices, or passions of man: And follow nature, saith he, therein, and thou shalt not err. The *Lawyer* saith what men have determined. The *Historian*, what men have done. The *Grammarian*, speaketh only of the rules of speech; and the *Rhetorician* and *Logician*, considering what in nature will soonest prove, and persuade thereon, give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The *Physician* weigheth the nature of man's body, and the nature of things helpful and hurtful unto it. And the *Metaphysick*, though it be in
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the second, and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernatural, yet doth he, indeed, build upon the depth of nature. Only the *Poet*, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature: in making things either *better* than nature bringeth forth, or *quite anew*; forms such as never were in nature, as the *Heroes*, *Demi-gods*, *Cyclops*, *Chymeras*, *Furies*, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not inclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiack of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as diverse poets have done; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much-loved earth more lovely; Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.

But let those things alone, and go to Man; for whom, as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her uttermost cunning is employed; and know, Whether she have brought forth so true a lover as *Theagenes*; so constant a friend as *Pyrrhus*; so valiant a man as *Orlando*; so right a prince as *Xenophon's Cyrus*; and so excellent a man every way as *Virgil's Æneas*? Neither let this be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be *essential*, the other in *imitation* or *fiction*;

tion ; for every understanding knoweth the skill of each artificer standeth in that *idea*, or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that *idea*, is manifest, by the delivering them forth in such excellency as he had imagined them ; which delivering forth, also, is not wholly imaginative, as we were wont to say by them that build castles in the air ; but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a *Cyrus*, which had been but a particular excellency, as nature might have done ; but to bestow a *Cyrus* upon the world to make many *Cyrusses* ; if they will learn aright, why, and how that Maker made him. Neither let it be deemed too faucy a comparison, to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature ; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to his own likeness, set him beyond, and over all the works of that second nature ; which in nothing he shewed so much as in Poetry ; when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings, with no small arguments to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of *Adam* ; since our erected *wit* maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected *will* keepeth us from reaching unto it. But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted : Thus much I hope will
be

be given me, that the *Greeks*, with some probability of reason, gave him the name above all names of learning.

Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be the more palpable; and so, I hope, though we get not so unmatched a praise, as the *etymology* of his names will grant, yet his very description, which no man will deny, shall not justly be barred from a principal Commendation.

Poesy therefore, is an Art of *imitation*; for so *Aristotle* termeth it in the word *μίμησις*; that is to say, A representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth: to speak metaphorically, A speaking picture; with this end, To teach and delight.

Of this have been *three* general kinds; the CHIEF, both in antiquity and excellency, were they that did imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God; such were *David* in his *Psalms*; *Solomon* in his *Song of Songs*, in his *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*; *Moses* and *Deborah* in their hymns; and the writer of *Job*; which, besides others, the learned *Emanuel Tremellius*, and *Fr. Junius* do intitle, the poetical part of the scripture: Against these none will speak that hath the Holy Ghost in due holy reverence. In this kind, though in a full wrong divinity, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his Hymns, and many others, both *Greeks* and *Romans*. And this *Poesy*

esy must be used by whosoever will follow St. *Paul's* counsel, in singing psalms when they are merry; and I know is used with the fruit of comfort by some, when, in sorrowful pangs of their death-bringing sins, they find the consolation of the never-leaving goodness.

The SECOND kind is of them that deal with matter philosophical; either Moral, as *Tyrtæus*, *Phocylides*, *Cato*; or Natural, as *Lucretius*, *Virgil's Georgicks*; or Astronomical, as *Manilius* and *Pontanus*; or Historical, as *Lucan*; which who mislike, the fault is in their judgment, quite out of taste, and not in the sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge.

But because this second sort is wrapped within the fold of the proposed subject, and takes not the free course of his own invention; whether they properly be Poets, or no, let *Grammarians* dispute, and go to the THIRD, indeed right Poets, of whom chiefly this question ariseth: Betwixt whom and these second is such a kind of difference, as betwixt the meaner sort of Painters, who counterfeit only such faces as are set before them; and the more excellent, who having no law but wit, bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see; as the constant, though lamenting look of *Lucretia*, when she punished in herself another's fault: Wherein he painteth not *Lucretia*, whom he never saw, but painteth the outward beauty
of

of such a vertue. For these THREE be they which most properly do imitate, to teach and delight; and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range only, reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what *may* be, and *should* be. These be they, that, as the first and most noble sort, may justly be termed *Vates*: So these are waited on in the excellentest languages and best understandings, with the fore-described name of *Poets*. For these, indeed, do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand, which, without delight, they would fly as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved: which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to bark at them.

These be subdivided into fundry more special denominations: The most notable be the *heroick*, *lyrick*, *tragick*, *comick*, *satyrick*, *iambick*, *elegiack*, *pastoral*, and certain others; some of these being termed according to the matter they deal with; some by the sort of verse they liked best to write in; for indeed the greatest part of poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numerous kind of writing which is called *verse*. Indeed but apparelled verse, being

being but an ornament, and no cause to poetry, since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets. For *Xenophon*, who did imitate so excellently as to give us *effigiem justi imperij*, the portraiture of a just empire, under the name of *Cyrus*, as *Cicero* saith of him, made therein an absolute heroical poem. So did *Heliodorus*, in his sugared invention of that picture of love in *Theagenes* and *Chariclea*; and yet both these wrote in prose; which I speak to shew, that it is not *rhyming* and *versing* that maketh a poet (no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who, though he pleaded in armour, should be an advocate and no soldier;) but it is, that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by. Although indeed the senate of poets have chosen verse as their fittest rayment; meaning, as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to go beyond them; not speaking, table-talk fashion, or like men in a dream, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but piecing each syllable of each word by just proportion, according to the dignity of the subject.

Now therefore it shall not be amiss, first, To weigh this latter sort of poetry, By his *works*,
and

and then, by *his parts*; and if in neither of these anatomies he be commendable, I hope we shall receive a more favourable sentence. This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth, or to what immediate end soever it be directed; the final end is, To lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of: This, according to the inclination of man, bred many formed impressions: for some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high or heavenly as to be acquainted with the stars, gave themselves to *astronomy*; others, persuading themselves to be *demi-gods*, if they knew the causes of things, became natural and supernatural *philosophers*. Some an admirable delight drew to *musick*; and some the certainty of demonstrations to the *mathematicks*; but all one and other having this scope, To know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body, to the enjoying his own divine essence. But when, by the balance of experience, it was found that the *astronomer*, looking to the stars, might fall in a ditch; that the enquiring *philosopher* might be blind in himself; and the *mathematician* might draw forth a strait line with a crooked

C

heart;

heart; then, lo! did proof, the over-ruler of opinions, make manifest, that all these are but serving sciences, which, as they have a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress knowledge, by the *Greeks* called ἀρχιτεχνονική, which stands, as I think, in the knowledge of a man's self; in the *ethick* and *politick* consideration, with the end of *well-doing*, and not of *well-knowing* only: Even as the saddler's next end is to make a good saddle, but his farther end, to serve a nobler faculty, which is horsemanship; so the horseman's to soldiery; and the soldier not only to have the skill, but to perform the practice of a soldier. So that the ending end of all earthly learning, being virtuous action, those skills that most serve to bring forth that, have a most just title to be princes over all the rest; wherein, if we can shew it rightly, the poet is worthy to have it before any other competitors.

Among whom principally to challenge it, step forth the moral *Philosophers*; whom, methinks, I see coming toward me with a fullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by day light rudely cloathed, for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things, with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names; sophistically speaking against subtlety, and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger. These
men

men casting largeffes as they go, of definitions, divisions, and distinctions, with a scornful interrogative, do soberly ask; Whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to virtue, as that which teacheth what virtue is; and teacheth it not only by delivering forth his very being, his causes and effects; but also by making known his enemy Vice, which must be destroyed; and his cumbersome servant Passion, which must be mastered; by shewing the generalities that contain it, and the specialities that are derived from it: lastly, by plain setting down how it extends itself out of the limits of a man's own little world, to the government of families, and maintaining of publick societies?

The *Historian* scarce gives leisure to the *Moralist* to say so much, but that he, (loaden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself, for the most part, upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation *Hearsay*, having much ado to accord differing writers, and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thousand years ago, than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goes, than how his own wit runs; curious for antiquities, and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks, and a tyrant in table-talk) denieth, in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of virtue and virtuous actions, is comparable to him. I am

Testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoria, magistra vitæ, nuncia vetustatis. The *philosopher*, saith he, teacheth a disputative virtue, but I do an active; his virtue is excellent in the dangerless *academy* of *Plato*, but mine sheweth forth her honourable face in the battles of *Marathon*, *Pharsalia*, *Poictiers*, and *Agincourt*: He teacheth virtue by certain abstract considerations; but I only bid you follow the footing of them that have gone before you: Old-aged experience goeth beyond the fine-witted *philosopher*; but I give the experience of many ages: Lastly, If he make the song book, I put the learner's hand to the lute; and if he be the guide, I am the light. Then would he alledge you innumerable examples, confirming story by stories, How much the wisest senators and princes have been directed by the credit of history, as *Brutus*, *Alphonfus* of *Arragon*, (and who not? if need be.) At length, the long line of their disputation makes a point in this, that the one giveth the *precept*, and the other the *example*.

Now whom shall we find, since the question standeth for the highest form in the school of learning, to be mediator? Truly, as me seemeth, the *Poet*; and if not a moderator, even the man that ought to carry the title from them both, and much more from all other serving sciences. Therefore compare we the *Poet* with the *Historian*, and with the moral *Philosopher*; and

and if he go beyond them both, no other human skill can match him: For as for the *Divine*, with all reverence, he is ever to be excepted, not only for having his scope as far beyond any of these, as eternity exceedeth a moment, but even for passing each of these in themselves: And for the *Lawyer*, though *Jus* be the daughter of *Justice*, the chief of virtues, yet because he seeks to make men good, rather *formidine pænæ*, than *virtutis amore*; or, to say righter, doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others, having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be: Therefore, as our wickedness maketh him necessary, and necessity maketh him honourable, so is he not in the deepest truth, to stand in rank with these, who all endeavour to take naughtiness away, and plant goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls. And these *four*, are all that any way deal in the consideration of mens manners, which being the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it, deserve the best commendation.

The *Philosopher* therefore, and the *Historian*, are they which would win the goal, the one by *precept*, the other by *example*; but both, not having both, do both halt. For the *Philosopher* sitting down with the thorny arguments, the bare rule is so hard of utterance, and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him, shall wade in him until he be
C 3 old,

old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general, that happy is that man who may understand him, and more happy, that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, The *Historian*, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what *should be*, but to what *is*; to the *particular truth* of things, and not to the *general reason* of things; that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless Poet perform *both*; for whatsoever the Philosopher saith should be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it, by some one by whom he pre-supposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture (I say) for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul, so much as that other doth. For as, in outward things, to a man that had never seen an *elephant*, or a *rhinoceros*, who should tell him most exquisitely, all their shape, colour, bigness, and particular marks? or of a gorgeous palace, an *architect*, who, declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were, by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceit, with being witness to
itself

itself of a true living knowledge : But the same man, as soon as he might see those beasts well painted, or that house well in model, should straitway grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them : So, no doubt, the *Philosopher*, with his learned definitions, be it of virtues or vices, matters of public policy or private government, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which, notwithstanding, lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of *Poesy*.

Tully taketh much pains, and many times not without poetical helps, to make us know what force the love of our country hath in us. Let us but hear old *Anchises*, speaking in the midst of *Troy's* flames, or see *Ulysses*, in the fulness of all *Calypso's* delights, bewail his absence from barren and beggarly *Ithaca*. Anger, the *Stoicks* said, was a short madness ; let but *Sophocles* bring you *Ajax* on a stage, killing or whipping sheep and oxen, thinking them the army of *Greeks*, with their chieftains *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus* : and tell me, If you have not a more familiar insight into anger, than finding in the schoolmen, his *genus* and *difference* ? See whether wisdom and temperance in *Ulysses* and *Dio-medes*, valour in *Achilles*, friendship in *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, even to an ignorant man, carry not an

apparent shining; and, contrarily, the remorse of conscience in *Oedipus*; the soon-repenting pride in *Agamemnon*; the self-devouring cruelty in his father *Atreus*; the violence of ambition in the two *Theban* brothers; the four sweetnesss of revenge in *Medea*; and, to fall lower, the *Terentian* *Gnatho*, and our *Chaucer's* *Pandar*, so expressed, that we now use their names, to signify their trades: And, finally, all virtues, vices, and passions, so, in their own natural states, laid to the view, that we seem not *to hear* of them, but clearly *to see* through them?

But even in the most excellent determination of goodness, what *Philosopher's* counsel can so readily direct a Prince, as the feigned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*? Or a virtuous man in all fortunes, as *Aeneas* in *Virgil*? Or a whole commonwealth, as the way of Sir *Thomas More's* *Utopia*? I say, The way, because where Sir *Thomas More* erred, it was the fault of the man, and not of the poet: for that way of patterning a commonwealth, was most absolute, though he, perchance, hath not so absolutely performed it. For the question is, Whether the feigned image of Poetry, or the regular instruction of Philosophy, hath the more force in teaching. Wherein, if the *Philosophers* have more rightly shewed themselves *Philosophers*, than the *Poets* have attained to the high top of their profession

sion (as in truth,

————— *Mediocribus esse poetis*

Non Dij, non homines, non concessere columnæ.)

It is, I say again, not the fault of the art, but that by few men that art can be accomplished. Certainly, even our Saviour Christ could as well have given the moral common places of uncharitableness and humbleness, as the divine narration of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: or of disobedience and mercy, as the heavenly discourse of the lost child and the gracious father; but that his thorough searching wisdom knew the estate of *Dives* burning in hell, and of *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* bosom, would more constantly, as it were, inhabit, both *the memory and judgment*. Truly, for myself (me seems) I see before mine eyes, the lost child's disdainful prodigality turned to envy a swine's dinner: which, by the learned *Divines*, are thought not historical acts, but instructing parables.

For conclusion, I say, the *Philosopher* teacheth, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned only, can understand him; that is to say, He teacheth them that are already taught. But the Poet is the food for the tender stomachs; the Poet is, indeed, the right popular *Philosopher*. Whereof *Æsop's* tales give good proof; whose pretty Allegories, stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many more beastly than beasts, begin to hear

hear the sound of virtue from those dumb speakers.

But now may it be alledged, That if this managing of matters be so fit for the imagination, then must the *Historian* needs surpass, who brings you images of true matters, such as, indeed, were done, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to have been done. Truly, *Aristotle* himself, in his Discourse of *Poesy*, plainly determineth this question, saying, That *Poetry* is φιλοσοφώτερον & σπουδαιότερον, that is to say, It is more philosophical, and more instructive than history. His reason is, Because *Poesy* dealeth with καθόλου, that is to say, With the *universal* consideration, and the history καθ' ἑκαστον, the *particular*. “Now, saith he, the
 “universal weighs what is fit to be said or done,
 “either in likelihood or necessity; which the
 “*Poesy* considereth in his imposed names: and
 “the particular only marks, whether *Alcibiades*
 “did, or suffered, *this* or *that* :” thus far *Aristotle*. Which reason of his, as all his, is most full of reason. For, indeed, if the question were, Whether it were better to have a particular act truly, or falsely set down? there is no doubt which is to be chosen, no more than whether you had rather have *Vespasian's* picture right as he was, or, at the painter's pleasure, nothing resembling? But if the question be, for your own use and learning, Whether it be
 better

better to have it set down as it *should* be, or as it *was*? then, certainly, is more doctrinable the feigned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*, than the true *Cyrus* in *Justin*; and the feigned *Æneas* in *Virgil*, than the *right* *Æneas* in *Dares Phrygius*: As to a lady that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace, a painter should more benefit her, to portrait a most sweet face, writing *Canidia* upon it, than to paint *Canidia* as she was, who, *Horace* sweareth, was full ill-favoured. If the *Poet* do his part aright, he will shew you in *Tantalus*, *Atreus*, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned; in *Cyrus*, *Æneas*, *Ulysses*, each thing to be followed: where the *Historian*, bound to tell things, as things were, cannot be liberal, without he will be poetical, of a perfect pattern; but, as in *Alexander*, or *Scipio* himself, shew doings, some to be liked, some to be mis-liked; And then how will you discern what to follow, but by your own discretion, which you had, without reading *Q. Curtius*? And whereas, a man may say, though in universal consideration of doctrine, the *Poet* prevaieth, yet that the history, in his saying such a thing was done, doth warrant a man more in that he shall follow; the answer is manifest; That if he stand upon that *was*, as if he should argue, because it rained yesterday, therefore it should rain to day; then, indeed, hath it some advantage to a gross conceit. But if he know

an example only informs a conjectured likelihood, and so go by reason, the *Poet* doth so far exceed him, as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable; be it in *warlike*, *political*, or *private* matters; where the *Historian* in his bare, *was*, hath, many times, that which we call fortune, to over-rule the best wisdom. Many times he must tell events, whereof he can yield no cause; or if he do, it must be poetically.

For, that a feigned example hath as much force to *teach*, as a true example, (for as for to *move*, it is clear, since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion) let us take one example wherein an *Historian* and a *Poet* did concur. *Herodotus* and *Justin*, do both testify, That *Zopyrus*, King *Darius's* faithful servant, seeing his master long resisted by the rebellious *Babylonians*, feigned himself in extreme disgrace of his king; for verifying of which, he caused his own nose and ears to be cut off, and so flying to the *Babylonians*, was received; and, for his known valour, so far credited, that he did find means to deliver them over to *Darius*. Much-like matters doth *Livy* record of *Tarquinius* and his son. *Xenophon* excellently feigned such another stratagem, performed by *Abradatus* in *Cyrus's* behalf. Now would I fain know, If occasion be presented unto you, to serve your prince by such an honest dissimulation, why do
you

you not as well learn it of *Xenophon's fiction*, as of the other's *verity*? and, truly, so much the better, as you shall save your nose by the bargain; for *Abradatus* did not counterfeit so far. So, then, the best of the *Historians* is subject to the *Poet*; for, whatsoever action or faction, whatsoever counsel, policy, or war-stratagem, the *Historian* is bound to recite, that may the *Poet*, if he list, with his imitation, make his own, beautifying it both for farther teaching, and more delighting, as it please him, having all, from *Dante's* heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen. Which, if I be asked, What *Poets* have done so? as I might well name some, so yet, say I, and say again, I speak of the art, and not of the artificer.

Now, to that which commonly is attributed to the praise of history, in respect of the notable learning which is got by marking the success, as tho' therein a man should see virtue exalted, and vice punished: truly, that commendation is peculiar to Poetry, and far off from History; for, indeed, Poetry ever sets Virtue so out in her best colours, making Fortune her well-waiting hand-maid, that one must needs be enamoured of her. Well may you see *Ulysses* in a storm, and in other hard plights; but they are but exercises of patience and magnanimity, to make them shine the more in the near following prosperity. And, on the contrary part, if evil men
come

come to the stage, they ever go out (as the tragedy-writer answered to one that misliked the shew of such persons) so manacled, as they little animate folks to follow them. But History being captived to the truth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness. For see we not valiant *Miltiades* rot in his fetters? The just *Phocion*, and the accomplished *Socrates*, put to death like traytors? The cruel *Severus* live prosperously? The excellent *Severus* miserably murthered? *Sylla* and *Marius* dying in their beds? *Pompey* and *Cicero* slain, then when they would have thought exile a happiness? See we not virtuous *Cato* driven to kill himself, and rebel *Cæsar* so advanced, that his name yet, after sixteen hundred years, lasteth in the highest honour? And mark but even *Cæsar's* own words of the fore-named *Sylla* (who, in that, only, did honestly, to put down his dishonest tyranny) *litteras nescivit*: as if want of learning caused him to do well. He meant it not by Poetry, which, not content with earthly plagues, deviseth new punishments in hell for tyrants: nor yet by Philosophy, which teacheth *occidentales esse*; but, no doubt, by skill in History; for that, indeed, can afford you *Cypselus*, *Periander*, *Phalaris*, *Dionysius*, and I know not how many more of the same kennel, that speed well enough

enough in their abominable injustice of usurpation.

I conclude, therefore, that He excelleth History, not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserves to be called and accounted good: which setting forward, and moving to well-doing, indeed, setteth the laurel crown upon the *Poets* as victorious, not only of the *Historian*, but over the *Philosopher*; howsoever, in teaching, it may be questionable. For suppose it be granted, that which I suppose, with great reason, may be denied, That the *Philosopher*, in respect of his methodical proceeding, *teach* more perfectly than the *Poet*, yet do I think, That no man is so much φιλοφιλόσοφος, as to compare the *Philosopher* in *moving* with the *Poet*. And, that *moving* is of a higher degree than *teaching*, it may by this appear, that it is well-nigh both the cause and effect of teaching; for who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth (I speak still of moral doctrine) as that it moveth one to do that which it doth reach. For, as *Aristotle* saith, It is not γνῶσις but πράξις must be the fruit: and how πράξις can be, without being moved to practise, it is no hard matter to consider. The *Philosopher* sheweth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousness

ousness of the way, as of the pleasant lodging you shall have when your journey is ended, as of the many bye-turnings that may divert you from your way ; but this is to no man, but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive, studious, painfulness ; which constant desire whosoever hath in him, hath already past half the hardness of the way, and therefore is beholden to the *Philosopher* but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought, that where once reason hath so much over-mastered passion, as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself, is as good as a *Philosopher's* book : since in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although, not in the words of art which *Philosophers* bestow upon us ; for out of natural conceit the *Philosophers* drew it : But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, *hoc opus, hic labor est.*

Now, therein, of all Sciences, (I speak still of human, and, according to the human conceit,) is our *Poet* the *Monarch*. For he doth not only shew the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will intice any man to enter into it : Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first, give you a cluster of grapes ; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass farther. He beginneth

neth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared, for the well-inchanting skill of *musick*; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale, which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner; and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste: which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the *Aloes* or *Rhubarbarum* they should receive, would sooner take their physick at their ears than at their mouth; so is it in men; (most of whom are childish in the best things, 'till they be cradled in their graves) glad they will be to hear the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Æneas*; and hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice; which, if they had been barely (that is to say, Philosophically) set out, they would swear they be brought to school again. That imitation whereof *Poetry* is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other: insomuch that, as *Aristotle* saith, Those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made, in poetical

D

imitation,

imitation, delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule*, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect *Poesy*, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. Who readeth *Æneas* carrying old *Anchises* on his back, that wisheth not, it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom doth not those words of *Turnus* move (the tale of *Turnus* having planted his image in the imagination)

——— *fugientem hæc terra videbit?*

Usque adeone mori miserum est?

Where the *Philosophers* (as they think) scorn to delight, so much they be content little to move, saving wrangling whether *Virtus* be the chief or the only good; whether the contemplative or the active life do excel: Which *Plato* and *Boetius* well knew; and therefore made mistress *Philosophy* very often borrow the masking raiment of *Poesy*. For even those hard-hearted evil men, who think virtue a school-name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the *Philosopher*, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon; yet will be content to be delighted, which is all the good-fellow *Poet* seems to promise; and so steal to see the form of goodness, which seen, they cannot but love, ere themselves

selves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.

Infinite proofs of the strange effects of this poetical invention might be alledged; only two shall serve, which are so often remembered, as, I think, all men know them. The one of *Menenius Agrippa*, who, when the whole people of *Rome* had resolutely divided themselves from the *Senate*, with apparent shew of utter ruin, though he were, for that time, an excellent orator, came not among them upon trust, either of figurative speeches, or cunning insinuations, and much less with far-fetched *maxims* of *Philosophy*, which, especially if they were *Platonick*, they must have learned *Geometry* before they could have conceived: but, forsooth, he behaveth himself like a homely and familiar *Poet*. He telleth them a tale, That there was a time, when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracy against the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of each other's labour: they concluded, they would let so unprofitable a spender starve. In the end, to be short, (for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale) with punishing the belly, they plagued themselves. This, applied by him wrought such effect in the people, as I never read that only words brought forth; but then so sudden, and so good an alteration, for upon

reasonable conditions, a perfect reconcilment ensued.

The other is of *Nathan* the Prophet, who, when the holy *David* had so far forsaken God, as to confirm adultery with murther, when he was to do the tenderest office of a friend, in laying his own shame before his eyes, being sent by God to call again so chosen a servant, how doth he it? but by telling of a man whose beloved lamb was ungratefully taken from his bosom. The application most divinely true, but the discourse itself feigned; which made *David* (I speak of the second and instrumental cause) as in a glass see his own filthiness, as that heavenly Psalm of mercy well testifieth.

By these, therefore, EXAMPLES and REASONS, I think it may be manifest, that the *Poet*, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And so a conclusion, not unfitly, ensues; THAT AS VIRTUE IS THE MOST EXCELLENT RESTING-PLACE FOR ALL WORLDLY LEARNING TO MAKE HIS END OF, SO POETRY, BEING THE MOST FAMILIAR TO TEACH IT, AND MOST PRINCELY TO MOVE TOWARDS IT, IN THE MOST EXCELLENT WORK, IS THE MOST EXCELLENT WORKMAN.

But I am content, not only to decypher him by his works (although works in commendation and dispraise, must ever hold a high authority) but more narrowly will examine his parts;
so

so that (as in a man) though all together may carry a presence full of majesty and beauty, perchance, in some one defectuous piece we may find blemish.

Now, in his parts, kinds, or species, as you list to term them, it is to be noted, that some *Poesies* have coupled together two or three kinds, as the *Tragical* and *Comical*, whereupon is risen, the *Tragi-comical*; some, in the manner, have mingled prose and verse, as *Sannazaro* and *Boetius*; some have mingled matters *heroical* and *pastoral*; but that cometh all to one in this question; for if *severed* they be good, the *conjunction* cannot be hurtful. Therefore, perchance, forgetting some, and leaving some as needless to be remembered, it shall not be amiss, in a word, to cite the special *kinds*, to see what faults may be found in the right use of them.

Is it then the *pastoral Poem* which is misliked? (For, perchance, where the hedge is lowest, they will soonest leap over) is the poor pipe disdained, which sometimes, out of *Mælibeus's* mouth, can shew the misery of people under hard lords and ravening soldiers? And again, by *Tytirus*, What blessedness is derived to them that lie lowest, from the goodness of them that sit highest? Sometimes under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong doing, and patience; sometimes shew, that contentions for trifles, can get

but a trifling victory ; where, perchance, a man may see, that even *Alexander* and *Darius*, when they strove who should be cock of this world's dunghill, the benefit they got, was, that the after-livers may say,

*Hæc memini & victum frustra contendere Thyrsim ;
Ex illo Corydon, Corydon est tempore nobis.*

Or is it the lamenting *Elegiack*, which, in a kind heart, would move rather pity than blame ; who bewaileth, with the great Philosopher *Heraclitus*, the weakness of mankind, and the wretchedness of the world ; who, surely, is to be praised, either for compassionately accompanying just causes of lamentations, or for rightly painting out how weak be the passions of woefulness ?

Is it the bitter, but wholesome, *lambick*, who rubs the galled mind, in making shame the trumpet of villainy, with bold and open crying out against naughtiness ?

Or the *Satirick*, who,

Omne vaser vitium ridenti tangit Amico,

Who sportingly never leaveth, until he make a man laugh at folly, and at length, ashamed to laugh at himself ; which he cannot avoid without avoiding the folly ? who, while *circum præcordia ludit*, giveth us to feel how many head-aches a passionate life bringeth to ? How, when all is done,

Est Ulubris, animus, si nos non deficit æquus ?

No,

No, perchance, it is the *Comick*; whom naughty play-makers and stage-keepers have justly made odious. To the arguments of abuse, I will after answer; only thus much now is to be said; That the *Comedy* is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be; so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now, as in *Geometry*, the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in *Arithmetick*, the odd as well as the even; so in the actions of our life, who seeth not the filthiness of evil, wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue. This doth the *Comedy* handle so, in our private and domestical matters, as, with hearing it, we get, as it were, an experience of what is to be looked for, of a niggardly *Demea*, of a crafty *Davus*, of a flattering *Gnatho*, of a vain-glorious *Thraso*: and not only to know what effects are to be expected, but to know, *who be such*, by the signifying badge given them by the *Comedian*. And little reason hath any man to say, That men learn the evil by seeing it so set out; since, as I said before, there is no man living, but by the force truth hath in nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts, but wisheth them in *Pistrinum*, although, perchance, the sack of his own faults lie so behind his back, that he seeth not himself to dance the same measure: whereto,

yet, nothing can more open his eyes, than to see his own actions contemptibly set forth. So that the right use of *Comedy*, will, I think, by nobody be blamed.

And much less of the high and excellent *Tragedy*, that openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the *Ulcers* that are covered with *Tissue*; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants to manifest their tyrannical humours; and with stirring the affections of *admiration* and *commiseration*, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundation gilded roofs are builded: that maketh us know, *Qui sceptrā sēvus duro imperio regit, timet timentes, metus in authorem redit*. But how much it can move, *Plutarch* yieldeth a notable testimony of the abominable tyrant *Alexander Phœreus*; from whose eyes a *Tragedy*, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears, who, without all pity, had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his own blood; so as he that was not ashamed to make matters for *Tragedies*, yet would not resist the sweet violence of a *Tragedy*. And if it wrought no farther good in him, it was, that he, in despite of himself, withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart. But it is not the *Tragedy* they do mislike, for it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned.

Is

Is it the *Lyrick* that most displeaseth, who with his tuned *Lyre*, and well accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts? who giveth moral precepts and natural problems? who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly, I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of *Percy* and *Douglas*, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice, than rude style: which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of *Pindar*? In *Hungary*, I have seen it the manner at all feasts, and other such-like meetings, to have songs of their ancestors valour, which that right soldier-like nation, think one of the chiefest kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable *Lacedaemonians* did not only carry that kind of *musick* ever with them to the field, but even at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be fingers of them: when the lusty men were to tell what they did, the old men, what they had done, and the young, what they would do. And where a man may say, That *Pindar*, many times, praiseth highly victories of small moment, rather matters of sport than virtue; as it may be answered, It was the fault of the *Poet*, and
not

not of the *Poetry*; so, indeed, the chief fault was in the time and custom of the *Greeks*, who set those toys at so high a price, that *Philip of Macedon* reckoned a horse-race won at *Olympus*, among his three fearful felicities. But as the inimitable *Pindar* often did, so is that kind most capable, and most fit, to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness, to embrace honourable enterprizes.

There rests the *Heroical*, whose very name, I think, should daunt all back-biters. For by what conceit can a tongue be directed to speak evil of that which draweth with him no less champions than *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Turnus*, *Tydeus*, *Rinaldo*? Who doth not only teach and move to *truth*, but teacheth and moveth to the most *high* and *excellent truth*? Who maketh magnanimity and justice shine through all misty fearfulness and foggy desires? Who, if the saying of *Plato* and *Pully* be true, That who could see virtue, would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty; This man setteth her out, to make her more lovely, in her holiday apparel, to the eye of any that would deign not to disdain, until they understand. But if any thing be already said in the defence of sweet *Poetry*, all concurrerth to the maintaining the *Heroical*, which is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of *Poetry*. For, as the image of each action sheweth and instructeth
the

the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies, most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy. Only let *Aeneas* be worn in the tablet of your memory; how he governeth himself in the ruin of his country; in the preserving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies; in obeying God's commandments, to leave *Dido*, though not only all passionate kindness, but even the human consideration of virtuous gratefulness, would have craved other of him; How in storms; how in sports; how in war; how in peace; how a fugitive; how victorious; how besieged; how besieging; how to strangers; how to allies; how to enemies; how to his own; lastly, how in his inward self; and how in his outward government; and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humour, he will be found in excellency fruitful. Yea, as *Horace* saith, *melius, Chrysippo, & Crantore*: But, truly, I imagine it falleth out with these Poet-whippers, as with some good women, who often are sick, but, in faith, they cannot tell where. So the name of *Poetry* is odious to them, but neither his *cause* nor *effects*, neither the *sum* that contains him, nor the *particularities* descending from him, give any fast handle to their carping dispraise.

Since, then, *Poetry* is of all human learning the most antient, and of most fatherly antiquity,
as

as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; *Since* it is so universal, that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; *Since* both *Roman* and *Greek* gave such divine names unto it, the one of *prophesying*, the other of *making*, and that, indeed, that name of *making* is fit for him, considering, that where all other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their being from it, the *Poet* only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of the matter, but maketh matter for a conceit; *Since* neither his description, nor end, containing any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; *Since* his effects be so good as to teach goodness, and delight the learners of it; *Since* therein (namely, in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges) he doth not only far pass the *Historian*, but, for instructing, is well nigh comparable to the *Philosopher*; for moving, leaveth him behind him; *Since* the holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanness) hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; *Since* all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their severed dissections fully commendable; I think (and think I think rightly) the laurel crown appointed for triumphant captains, doth worthily, of all other learnings, honour the *Poet's* triumph.

But

But because we have ears as well as tongues, and that the lightest reasons that may be, will seem to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the counter-balance, let us hear, and, as well as we can, ponder what objections be made against this art, which may be worthy either of yielding or answering.

First, truly, I note, not only in these *μισοποιῶντες* Poet-haters, but in all that kind of people who seek a praise by dispraising others, that they do prodigally spend a great many wandering words in quips and scoffs, carping and taunting at each thing, which, by stirring the spleen, may stay the brain from a thorough beholding the worthiness of the subject. Those kind of objections, as they are full of a very idle easiness, (since there is nothing of so sacred a majesty, but that an itching tongue may rub itself upon it;) so deserve they no other answer, but, instead of laughing at the jest, to laugh at the jester. We know a playing wit can praise the discretion of an ass, the comfortableness of being in debt, and the jolly commodities of being sick of the plague: So, of the contrary side, if we will turn *Ovid's* verse,

Ut lateat virtus proximitate mali,

That good lies hid in nearness of the evil, Agrippa will be as merry in the shewing the vanity of science, as *Erasmus* was in the commending of folly:

folly : neither shall MAN or MATTER escape some touch of these smiling railers. But for *Erasmus* and *Agrippa*, they had another foundation than the superficial part would promise. Marry, these other pleasant fault-finders, who will correct the *Verb* before they understand the *Noun*, and confute others knowledge, before they confirm their own ; I would have them only remember, That scoffing cometh not of wisdom ; so as the best title in true *English* they get with their merriments, is to be called *good fools* ; for so have our fore-fathers ever termed that humourous kind of jesters.

But that which giveth greatest scope to their scorning humour, is rhyming and versing. It is already said (and, as I think, truly said) *It is not rhyming and versing that maketh Poesy* : one may be a *Poet* without versing, and a *Verfifier* without *Poetry*. But yet, presuppose it were inseparable, as, indeed, it seemeth *Scaliger* judgeth truly, it were an inseparable commendation : For if *Oratio* next to *Ratio*, Speech next to Reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality, that cannot be praiseless, which doth most polish that blessing of speech ; which considereth each word, not only, as a man may say, by his forcible quality, but by his best measured quantity ; carrying even in themselves a *harmony* ; without, perchance, number, measure, order, proportion, be in our time grown odious. But

But lay aside the just praise it hath, by being the only fit speech for *musick*; (*musick*, I say, the most divine striker of the senses;) thus much is undoubtedly true, That if reading be foolish without remembering, memory being the only treasure of knowledge, those words which are fittest for memory, are likewise most convenient for knowledge. Now, that verse far exceedeth prose, in the knitting up of the memory, the reason is manifest; the words, (besides their delight, which hath a great affinity to memory) being so set, as one cannot be lost, but the whole work fails: which accusing itself, calleth the remembrance back to itself, and so most strongly confirmeth it. Besides, one word so, as it were, begetting another, as be in rhyme or measured verse, by the former a man shall have a near guess to the follower. Lastly, even they that have taught the art of memory, have shewed nothing so apt for it, as a certain room divided into many places, well and thoroughly known: Now that hath the verse in effect perfectly, every word having his natural seat, which seat must needs make the word remembered. But what needs more in a thing so known to all men? Who is it, that ever was a scholar, that doth not carry away some verses of *Virgil*, *Horace*, or *Cato*, which in his youth he learned; and even to his old age serve him for hourly lessons? as,

Per-

*Percontatorem fugito nam garrulus idem est.
Dum sibi quisque placet credula turba sumus.*

But the fitness it hath for memory, is notably proved by all delivery of arts, wherein, for the most part, from *Grammar* to *Logick*, *Mathematics*, *Physick*, and the rest, the rules chiefly necessary to be borne away, are compiled in verses. So that verse being in itself sweet and orderly, and being best for memory, the only handle of knowledge, it must be in jest that any man can speak against it.

Now, then, go we to the most important imputations laid to the poor *Poets*; for aught I can yet learn, they are these.

First, That there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them, than in this.

Secondly, That it is the mother of lies.

Thirdly, That it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, with a *Syren-sweetness*, drawing the mind to the serpent's tail of sinful fancies; and herein, especially, *Comedies* give the largest field to ear, as *Chaucer* saith; How both in other nations, and in ours, before *Poets* did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike

manlike liberty, and not lulled asleep in shady idleness with *Poets* pastimes.

And, *lastly*, and chiefly, They cry out, with open mouth, as if they had over-shot *Robin Hood*, That *Plato* banished them out of the Common-wealth. Truly, this is much, if there be much truth in it.

First, To the first, That a man might better spend his time, is a reason indeed : but it doth, as they say, but *petere principium*. For if it be, as I affirm, that no learning is so good, as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as *Poesy*, then is the conclusion manifest ; That ink and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed. And certainly, though a man should grant their first assumption, it should follow (methinks) very unwillingly, that *good is not good, because better is better*. But I still and utterly deny, that there is sprung out of the earth a more fruitful knowledge.

To the *Second*, therefore, That they should be the principal lyars, I answer *Paradoxically*, but truly, I think truly, That of all writers under the Sun, the *Poet* is the least lyar ; and though he would, as a *Poet*, can scarcely be a lyar. The *Astronomer*, with his cousin the *Geometrician*, can hardly escape when they take upon them to measure the height of the stars. How often, think you, do the *Physicians* lye,
E
when

when they aver things good for sicknesses, which afterwards send *Charon* a great number of souls drowned in a potion before they come to his ferry? And no less of the rest which take upon them to *affirm*. Now for the *Poet*, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lyeth; for, as I take it, to lye, is to affirm that to be true which is false: So as the other *Artists*, and especially the *Historian*, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lyes: But the *Poet*, as I said before, never affirmeth; the *Poet* never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writeth: He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry, calleth the sweet *Muses* to inspire into him a good invention: In troth, not labouring to tell you *what is*, or *is not*, but *what should*, or *should not be*. And, therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lyeth not; unless we will say, That *Nathan* lyed in his speech, before alledged, to *David*; which, as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I, none so simple would say; That *Æsop* lyed in the tales of his beasts; for who thinketh that *Æsop* wrote it for actually true, were well worthy to have his name chronicled among the beasts he writeth of. What child is there that coming to a Play, and seeing *THE BEES* written in great letters upon an old door,

door, doth believe that it is *Thebes*? If then a man can arrive to the child's age, to know that the *Poets* persons and doings, are but pictures what should be, and not stories what have been, they will never give the lye to things not affirmatively, but allegorically and figuratively, written; and therefore, as in History, looking for truth, they may go away full fraught with falsehood, so in *Poesy*, looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plat of a profitable invention.

But hereto is replied, That the *Poets* give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so not being true, proveth a falsehood. And doth the *Lawyer* lye then, when, under the names of *John* of the *Stile*, and *John* of the *Nokes*, he putteth his case? But that is easily answered, Their naming of men, is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any history. Painting men, they cannot leave men nameless: We see we cannot play at *Ches*, but that we must give names to our chess-men; and yet, methinks, he were a very partial champion of truth, that would say we lyed, for giving a piece of wood the reverend title of a Bishop. The *Poet* nameth *Cyrus* and *Æneas* no other way, than to shew what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates, should do.

Their *Third* is, How much it abuseth mens wit, training it to a wanton sinfulness, and lustful love. For, indeed, that is the principal, if not, only, abuse, I can hear alledged. They say, The *Comedies* rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits: They say the *Lyrick* is larded with passionate *sonnets*; the *Elegiack* weeps the want of his mistress; and that even to the *Heroical*, *Cupid* hath ambitiously climbed. Alas! Love, I would thou couldst as well defend thyself, as thou canst offend others! I would those on whom thou dost attend, could either put thee away, or yield good reason why they keep thee! But grant love of beauty to be a beastly fault, although it be very hard, since only man, and no beast, hath that gift to discern beauty; grant that lovely name of Love to deserve all hateful reproaches, although even some of my masters the *Philosophers* spent a good deal of their lamp-oil in setting forth the excellency of it; grant, I say, what they will have granted, That not only love, but lust, but vanity, but, if they list, scurrility, possess many leaves of the *Poet's* books; yet, think I, when this is granted, they will find their sentence may, with good manners, put the last words foremost; and not say, that *Poetry* abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth *Poetry*. For I will not deny, but that man's wit may make *Poesy*, which should be *φρασην*, which some learned

learned have defined figuring forth good things, to be *φανταστική*: which doth contrariwise infect the fancy with unworthy objects; as the painter, who should give to the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine picture fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as *Abraham* sacrificing his son *Isaac*, *Judith* killing *Holofernes*, *David* fighting with *Goliath*; may leave those, and please an ill-pleased eye with wanton shews of better hidden matters.

But, what! shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious? Nay, truly, though I yield that *Poesy* may not only be abused, but that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any other army of words, yet shall it be so far from concluding, that the abuse shall give reproach to the abused, that, contrariwise, it is good reason, that whatsoever being abused, doth most harm, being rightly used (and upon the right use, each thing receives his title) doth most good. Do we not see skill of Physick, the best rampire to our often assaulted bodies, being abused, teach poison, the most violent destroyer? Doth not knowledge of law, whose end is, to even and right all things, being abused, grow the crooked fosterer of horrible injuries? Doth not (to go in the highest) God's word abused, breed heresy, and his name abused, become blasphemy? Truly, a needle cannot do much hurt,

and as truly (with leave of ladies be it spoken) it cannot do much good. With a sword thou mayst kill thy father; and with a sword thou mayst defend thy prince and country: so that, as in their calling *Poets*, fathers of lyes, they said nothing, so in this their argument of abuse, they prove the commendation.

They alledge herewith, That before *Poets* began to be in price, our nation had set their heart's delight upon *action*, and not *imagination*; rather doing things worthy to be written, than writing things fit to be done. What that before time was, I think scarcely *Sphynx* can tell: since no memory is so antient, that gives not the precedence to *Poetry*. And certain it is, that in our plainest homeliness, yet never was the *Albion* nation without *Poetry*. Marry, this Argument, though it be levelled against *Poetry*, yet is it indeed a chain-shot against all learning or bookishness, as they commonly term it. Of such mind were certain *Goths*; of whom it is written, That having in the spoil of a famous city, taken a fair library, one hangman belike fit to execute the fruits of their wits, who had murdered a great number of bodies, would have set fire in it. No, said another, very gravely, *take heed what you do, for while they are busy about those toys, we shall, with more leisure, conquer their countries.* This, indeed, is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many words sometimes

sometimes I have heard spent in it : but because this reason is generally against all learning, as well as *Poetry*, or rather all learning but *Poetry*; because it were too large a digression to handle it, or at least too superfluous; since it is manifest that all government of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge best, by gathering many knowledges, which is reading; I only say with *Horace*, to him that is of that opinion,

jubeo stultum esse libenter —

For as for *Poetry* itself, it is the freest from this objection; for *Poetry* is the companion of camps. I dare undertake, *Orlando Furioso*, or honest king *Arthur*, will never displease a soldier: but the Quiddity of *Ens* and *Prima materia*, will hardly agree with a corselet. And therefore, as I said in the beginning, even *Turks* and *Tartars* are delighted with *Poets*. *Homer* a *Greek*, flourished, before *Greece* flourished: and if a slight conjecture, a conjecture may be opposed, truly it may seem, that as by him their learned men took almost their first light of knowledge, so their active men received their first motions of courage. Only *Alexander's* example may serve, who by *Plutarch* is accounted of such virtue, that fortune was not his guide, but his footstool; whose acts speak for him,

though *Plutarch* did not, to be indeed the *Phoenix* of warlike Princes. This *Alexander*, left his Schoolmaster, living *Aristotle*, behind him, but took dead *Homer* with him. He put the Philosopher *Callisthenes* to death, for his seeming philosophical, indeed mutinous stubbornness; but the chief thing he was ever heard to wish for, was, that *Homer* had been alive. He well found he received more bravery of mind by the *pattern* of *Achilles*, than by hearing the *definition* of fortitude. And therefore, if *Cato* misliked *Fulvius* for carrying *Ennius* with him to the field; it may be answered, That if *Cato* misliked it, the noble *Fulvius* liked it, or else he had not done it; for it was not the excellent *Cato Uticensis*, whose authority I would much more have revered: but it was the *former*; in truth a bitter punisher of faults, but else a man that had never sacrificed to the *Graces*. He misliked and cried out against all *Greek* learning; and yet, being fourscore years old, began to learn it, belike fearing that *Pluto* understood not *Latin*. Indeed the *Roman* laws allowed no person to be carried to the wars, but he that was in the soldiers roll. And therefore though *Cato* misliked his mustered person, he misliked not his work. And if he had, *Scipio Nasica* (judged by common consent the best *Roman*) loved him: both the other *Scipio* brothers, who had by their virtues no less surnames than

than of *Asia* and *Africk*, so loved him, that they caused his body to be buried in their sepulture. So as *Cato's* authority being but against his person, and that answered with so far greater than himself, is herein of no validity.

But now indeed my burthen is great, that *Plato's* name is laid upon me, whom I must confess of all *Philosophers*, I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence; and with good reason, since of all *Philosophers*, he is the most *Poetical*: yet if he will defile the fountain out of which his flowing streams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reasons he did it.

First, truly, a man might maliciously object, That *Plato*, being a *Philosopher*, was a natural enemy of *Poets*. For, indeed, after the *Philosophers* had picked out the sweet mysteries of *Poetry*, the right discerning true points of knowledge, they forthwith putting it in method; and making a school art of that which the *Poets* did only teach by a divine delightfulness, beginning to spurn at their guides, like ungrateful apprentices, were not content to set up shop for themselves, but fought by all means to discredit their masters; which by the source of delight being barred them, the less they could overthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeed they found for *Homer*, seven cities strove who should have him for their citizen, where many cities banished *Philosophers*,

as not fit members to live among them. For only repeating certain of *Euripides's* Verses, many *Athenians* had their lives saved of the *Syracusians*; where the *Athenians* themselves thought many *Philosophers* unworthy to live. Certain *Poets*, as *Simonides*, and *Pindar*, had so prevailed with *Hiero* the first, that of a tyrant they made him a just king: where *Plato* could do so little with *Dionysius*, that he himself, of a *Philosopher*, was made a slave. But who should do this, I confess, should requite the objections made against *Poets*, with like cavilations against *Philosophers*: as likewise one should do, that should bid one read *Phædrus* or *Symposium* in *Plato*, or the discourse of Love in *Plutarch*, and see whether any *Poet* do authorize abominable filthiness as they do.

Again, A man might ask, Out of what common-wealth *Plato* doth banish them? In sooth, thence where he himself alloweth community of women. So as belike, this banishment grew not for effeminate wantonness, since little should poetical *sonnets* be hurtful, when a man might have what woman he listed. But I honour philosophical instructions, and bless the wits which bred them, so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to *Poetry*. Saint *Paul* himself sets a watch-word upon *Philosophy*, indeed upon the abuse. So doth *Plato* upon the abuse, not upon *Poetry*. *Plato* found fault that the *Poets*
of

of his time, filled the world with wrong opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that unspotted essence; and therefore would not have the youth depraved with such opinions. Herein may much be said: Let this suffice. The *Poets* did not induce such opinions, but did imitate those opinions already induced. For all the *Greek* stories can well testify, that the very religion of that time, stood upon many, and many-fashioned Gods: not taught so by *Poets*, but followed according to their nature of imitation. Who list may read in *Plutarch*, the discourses of *Isis* and *Osiris*; Of the cause why Oracles ceased; Of the divine providence; and see whether the *Theology* of that nation, stood not upon such dreams, which the *Poets* indeed superstitiously observed. And truly since they had not the light of Christ, did much better in it than the *Philosophers*, who shaking off superstition, brought in *Atheism*.

Plato, therefore, whose authority I had much rather justly construe, than unjustly resist, meant not in general of *Poets*, in those words of which *Julius Scaliger* saith; *Qua auctoritate, barbari quidam atque insipidi, abuti velint ad Poetas e Republicâ exigendos*. But only meant to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deity: whereof now, without further law, *Christianity* hath taken away all the hurtful belief, perchance as he thought, nourished by then esteemed *Poets*.
And

And a man need go no farther than to *Plato* himself, to know his meaning: who in his Dialogue called *Ion*, giveth high, and rightly, divine commendation unto *Poetry*. So as *Plato* banishing the *abuse*, not the *thing*, not banishing it, but giving due honour to it, shall be our *patron*, and not our *adversary*. For, indeed, I had much rather, since truly I may do it, shew their mistaking of *Plato*, under whose lion's skin they would make an afs-like braying against *Poesy*, than go about to overthrow his authority; whom, the wiser a man is, the more just cause he shall find to have in admiration: especially since he attributeth unto *Poesy* more than myself do; namely, To be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit, as in the forenamed Dialogue is apparent.

Of the other side, who would shew the honours have been by the best sort of judgments granted them, a whole sea of examples would present themselves; *Alexanders*, *Cæsars*, *Scipios*, all favourers of *Poets*; *Lælius*, called the Roman *Socrates*, himself a *Poet*; so as part of *Heautontimeroumenos* in *Terence*, was supposed to be made by him. And even the *Greek Socrates*, whom *Apollo* confirmed to be the only wise man, is said to have spent part of his old time in putting *Æsop's* Fables into verse. And therefore, full evil should it become his scholar *Plato*, to put such words in his master's mouth against *Poets*.

Poets. But what needs more? *Aristotle* writes the Art of *Poesy*; and why, if it should not be written? *Plutarch* teacheth the use to be gathered of them; and how, if they should not be read? And who reads *Plutarch's* either *History* or *Philosophy*, shall find he trimmeth both their garments with gards of *Poesy*.

But I list not to defend *Poesy* with the help of his underling *Historiographer*. Let it suffice to have shewed, it is a fit soil for praise to dwell upon, and what dispraise may be set upon it, is either easily overcome, or transformed into just commendation. So that since the excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confirmed, and the low creeping objections so soon trodden down; it not being an art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening man's wit; not banished, but honoured by *Plato*; let us rather plant more laurels for to ingarland the *Poets* heads (which humour of being laureat, as besides them only triumphant captains were, is a sufficient authority to shew the price they ought to be held in) than suffer the ill favoured breath of such wrong speakers once to blow upon the clear springs of *Poesy*.

But since I have run so long a career in this matter, methinks, before I give my pen a full stop, it shall be but a little more lost time to inquire;

inquire; Why *England*, the mother of excellent minds, should be grown so hard a step-mother to *Poets*; who, certainly, in wit, ought to pass all others, since all only proceeds from their wit, being, indeed, makers of themselves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaim,

Musa mihi causas memora quo numine læso—

Sweet *Poesy*, that hath antiently had kings, emperors, senators, great captains, such as, besides a thousand others, *David*, *Adrian*, *Sophocles*, *Germanicus*, not only to favour *Poets*, but to be *Poets*: and of our nearer times, can present for her patrons, a *Robert* king of *Sicily*; the great king *Francis* of *France*; king *James* of *Scotland*; such cardinals as *Bembus* and *Bibiena*; such famous preachers and teachers as *Beza* and *Melancthon*; so learned *philosophers* as *Fracastorius* and *Scaliger*; so great orators as *Pontanus* and *Muretus*; so piercing wits as *George Buchanan*; so grave counsellors, as besides many, but before all, that *Hospital* of *France*; than whom, I think, that realm never brought forth a more accomplished judgment, more firmly builded upon virtue; I say, These, with numbers of others, not only to read others *Poesies*, but to *poetise* for others reading: that *Poesy*, thus embraced, in all other places, should only find, in our time, a hard welcome in *England*; I think the very
earth

earth laments it, and therefore decks our soil with fewer laurels than it was accustomed. For heretofore *Poets* have in *England* also flourished; and, which is to be noted, even in those times, when the trumpet of *Mars* did sound loudest. And now, that an over-faint quietness should seem to strew the house for *Poets*, they are, almost, in as good reputation, as the *Mountebanks* at *Venice*. Truly, even that, as of the one side it giveth great praise to *Poesy*, which, like *Venus* (but to better purpose) had rather be troubled in the net with *Mars*, than enjoy the homely quiet of *Vulcan*; so serveth it for a piece of a reason, why they are less grateful to idle *England*, which now can scarce endure the pain of a pen. Upon this, necessarily followeth, That base men, with servile wits, undertake it, who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer: and so as *Epaminondas* is said, with the honour of his virtue, to have made an office, by his exercising it, which before was contemptible, to become highly respected; so these men, no more but setting their names to it, by their own disgracefulness, disgrace the most graceful *Poesy*. For now, as if all the *musés* were got with child, to bring forth bastard *Poets*, without any commission, they do post over the banks of *Helicon*, until they make the readers more weary than post-horses; while, in the mean time, they

Queis

Queis meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,

are better content to suppress the out-flowings of their wit, than by publishing them to be accounted Knights of the same order.

But I that, before ever I durst aspire unto the dignity, am admitted into the company of the *Paper-blurrers*, do find the very true cause of our wanting estimation, is want of desert, taking upon us to be *Poets* in despite of *Pallas*. Now wherein we want desert, were a thank-worthy labour to express. But if I knew, I should have mended myself; but as I never desired the title, so have I neglected the means to come by it; only, over-mastered by some thoughts, I yielded an inky tribute unto them. Marry, they that delight in *Poesy* itself, should seek to know what they do: and how they do, especially, look themselves in an unflattering glass of reason, if they be inclinable unto it.

For *Poesy* must not be drawn by the ears, it must be gently led, or rather it must lead; which was partly the cause that made the antient learned affirm, It was a divine, and no human skill, since all other knowledges lie ready for any that have strength of Wit: A *Poet* no industry can make, if his own *genias* be not carried into it. And therefore is an old proverb, *Orator fit, Poeta nascitur*. Yet confess I always, That as the fertilest ground must be manured,

so

so must the highest flying wit have a *Dædalus* to guide him. That *Dædalus*, they say, both in this, and in other, hath three wings to bear itself up into the air of due commendation; that is, *Art*, *Imitation*, and *Exercise*. But these, neither artificial rules, nor imitative patterns, we much cumber ourselves withal. Exercise, indeed, we do, but that, very fore-backwardly; for where we should exercise to know, we exercise as having known; and so is our brain delivered of much matter, which never was begotten by knowlege. For there being two principal parts, matter to be expressed by words, and words to express the matter, in neither, we use art or imitation rightly. Our matter is *Quodlibet*, indeed, though wrongly performing *Ovid's* verse:

Quicquid conabor dicere, versus erit.

Never marshalling it into any assured rank, that, almost, the readers cannot tell where to find themselves.

Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus* and *Cressida*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he, in that misty time, could see so clearly, or that we, in this clear age, go so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fit to be forgiven in so great an antiquity. I account *The Mirror of*

F

Magistrates,

Magistrates, meetly furnished of beautiful parts. And in the Earl of *Surrey's Lyricks*, many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The *Shepherd's Kalendar* hath much *Poesy* in his *Eclogues*, indeed, worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his stile to an old rustick language, I dare not allow: since neither *Theocritus* in *Greek*, *Virgil* in *Latin*, nor *Sannazaro* in *Italian*, did affect it. Besides these, I do not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed that have poetical finews in them. For proof whereof, let but most of the verses be put in proof, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found, that one verse did but beget another, without ordering, at the first, what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tinkling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason.

Our tragedies and comedies, not without cause, are cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civility, nor skilful *poetry*. Excepting *Gorboduc* (again I say of those that I have seen) which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches, and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of *Seneca* his stile, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of *Poesy*; yet, in truth, it is very defectuous in the *circumstances*, which grieves me, because it might not remain

remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in *place* and *time*, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one *place*; and the uttermost *time* pre-supposed in it, should be, both by *Aristotle's* precept, and common reason, *but one day*; there is both many days and many places, inartificially imagined.

But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest? where you shall have *Asia* of the one side, and *Africk* of the other; and so many other under kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now, you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By-and-by, we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the mean time, two armies fly in, represented with swords and bucklers, and then, what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?

Now of *time*, they are much more liberal: For ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses, she is got with child; delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to

get another child; and all this in two hours space: which, how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine; and Art hath taught, and all antient examples justified, and at this day, the ordinary players in *Italy* will not err in. Yet will some bring in an example of the *Eunuch* in *Terence*, that containeth matter of two days, yet far short of twenty years. True it is; and so was it to be played in two days, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though *Plautus* have in one place done amiss, let us hit it with him, and not miss with him.

But they will say; How then shall we set forth a story which contains both *many places, and many times*? And do they not know, That a tragedy is tied to the laws of Poesy, and not of History; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical convenience? Again, many things may be told, which cannot be shewed: if they know the difference betwixt *reporting* and *representing*. As for example, I may speak, though I am here, of *Peru*, and in speech digress from that, to the description of *Calicut*: but in action I cannot represent it, without *Pacolet's* horse. And so was the manner the antients took by some *Nuntius*, to recount things done in *former* time, or *other* place.

Lastly,

Lastly, If they will represent an History, they must not (as *Horace* saith) begin *ab ovo*; but they must come to the principal point of *that one action* which they will represent. By example this will be the best expressed. I have a story of young *Polydorus*, delivered, for safety's sake, with great riches by his father *Priamus*, to *Polymnestor* king of *Thrace*, in the *Trojan* war time. He, after some years, hearing of the overthrow of *Priamus*, for to make the treasure his own, murthereth the child; the body of the child is taken up; *Hecuba*, she, the same day, findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child? Then should he sail over into *Thrace*, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth *Euripides*? Even with the finding of the body; leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of *Polydorus*. This needs no farther to be enlarged; the dullest wit may conceive it.

But besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right Tragedies nor right Comedies, mingling Kings and Clowns, not because the matter so carrieth, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their

mongrel *Tragi-comedy* obtained. I know *Apuleius* did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I know the antients have one or two examples of *Tragi-comedies*, as *Plautus* hath *Amphytrio*. But if we mark them well, we shall find, that they never, or very daintily, *match* *born-pipes and funerals*. So falleth it out, that having, indeed, no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of any chaste ears; or some extreme shew of doltishness, indeed, fit to lift up a loud laughter, and nothing else: where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight; as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration.

But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong; for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter; but well may one thing breed two together. Nay, in themselves, they have, as it were, a kind of contrariety. For delight we scarcely do, but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves, or to the general nature. Laughter, almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature: Delight hath a joy in it either permanent or present: Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. For example; We are ravished with
delight

delight to see a fair woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter: We laugh at deformed creatures, wherein, certainly, we cannot delight: We delight in good chances: We laugh at mischances: We delight to hear the happiness of our friends and country, at which he were worthy to be laughed at, that would laugh: We shall, contrarily, sometimes laugh to find a matter quite mistaken, and go down the hill against the bias; in the mouth of some such men, as for the respect of them, one shall be heartily sorry, he cannot chuse but laugh, and so is rather pained than delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not, but that they may go well together; for, as in *Alexander's* picture well set out, we delight without laughter, and in twenty mad anticks we laugh without delight: so in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in a woman's attire, spinning at *Omphale's* commandment, it breeds both delight and laughter; for the representing of so strange a power in love, procures delight, and the scornfulness of the action stirreth laughter.

But I speak to this purpose, That all the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but mix with it that delightful teaching, which is the end of *Poesy*. And the great fault, even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by *Aristotle*, is, That they stir laughter in sinful things, which

are rather execrable than ridiculous; or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied, than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar, and a beggarly clown; or, against the law of hospitality, to jest at strangers, because they speak not *English* so well as we do? What do we learn, since it is certain,

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit?*

But rather a busy loving courtier, and a heartless threatening *Thraso*; a self wise seeming school master; a wry-transformed traveller; these, if we saw walk in stage names, which we play naturally, therein were delightful laughter, and teaching delightfulness; as in the other, the tragedies of *Buchanan* do justly bring forth a divine admiration.

But I have lavished out too many words on this play-matter; I do it, because, as they are excelling parts of *Poesy*, so is there none so much used in England, and none can be more pitifully abused; which, like an unmannerly daughter, shewing a bad education, causeth her mother *Poesy's* honesty to be called in question.

Other sort of *Poetry*, almost, have we none, but that *Lyrical* kind of songs and sonnets, which, if the Lord gave us so good minds, how well it might be employed, and with how heavenly

venly fruits, both private and publick, in singing the praises of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodness of that God, who giveth us hands to write, and wits to conceive; of which we might well want words, but never matter; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we should ever have new budding occasions.

But, truly, many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistable love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers writings, and so caught up certain swelling phrases, which hang together like a man that once told me, *The wind was at North-west and by South*; because he would be sure to name winds enough; than that, in truth, they feel those passions, which easily, as I think, may be bewrayed by the same forcibleness, or *Energia* (as the *Greeks* call it) of the writer. But let this be a sufficient, though short note, that we miss the right use of the material point of *Poesy*.

Now for the outside of it, which is words, or (as I may term it) *Diction*, it is even well worse: so is that honey flowing matron *Eloquence*, apparelled, or rather disguised in a courtezan like painted affectation. One time with so far-fetcht words that many seem monsters, but must seem strangers to any poor *Englishman*: Another time with courting of a letter, as if they were bound to

to follow the method of a Dictionary : Another time with figures and flowers, extremely winter-starved.

But I would this fault were only peculiar to Versifiers, and had not as large possession among Prose-printers : and, which is to be marvelled, among many scholars, and, which is to be pitied, among some preachers. Truly, I could wish (if at least I might be so bold to wish, in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity), the diligent imitators of *Tully* and *Demosthenes*, most worthy to be imitated, did not so much keep *Nizolian* paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation, as it were, devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served at the table : like those *Indians*, not content to wear ear-rings, at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine. *Tully*, when he was to drive out *Catiline*, as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often useth the figure of repetition, as *Vivit & vincit, imo in senatum venit, imo in senatum venit, &c.* Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, he would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth ; and so do that *artificially*, which we see men in choler do *naturally*. And we having noted the grace of those words hale them in sometimes to
a fa-

a familiar epistle, when it were too much choler to be cholerick.

How well, store of *Similiter Cadences* doth found with the gravity of the pulpit, I would but invoke *Demosthenes's* soul to tell, who with a *rare daintiness* useth them. Truly, they have made me think of the *sophister*, that with too much subtlety would prove two eggs three, and though he might be counted a *sophister*, had none for his labour. So these men bringing in such a kind of eloquence, well may they obtain an opinion of a seeming fineness, but persuade few, which should be the end of their fineness.

Now for similitude in certain printed discourses, I think all herbalists, all stories of beasts, fowls and fishes are rifled up, that they may come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. For the force of a similitude not being to prove any thing to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer; when that is done, the rest is a most tedious pratling, rather overswaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applied, than any whit informing the judgment already either satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied.

For my part, I do not doubt, when *Antonius* and *Crassus*, the great forefathers of *Cicero* in eloquence, the one (as *Cicero* testifieth of them) pretended

pretended not to know art, the other not to set by it, because with a plain sensibleness they might win credit of popular ears, which credit is the nearest step to persuasion (which persuasion is the chief mark of oratory) I do not doubt, I say, but that they used these knacks very sparingly; which who doth generally use, any man may see, doth dance to his own musick; and so to be noted by the audience, more careful to speak *curiously* than *truly*. Undoubtedly (at least to my opinion undoubtedly) I have found in divers small-learned courtiers a more sound stile, than in some professors of learning; of which I can guess no other cause, but that the courtier following that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according *to* art, though *not by* art: where the other, using art to shew art, and not hide art (as in these cases he should do) flyeth from nature, and indeed abuseth art.

But what? methinks I deserve to be pounded for straying from *Poetry* to *Oratory*: but both have such an affinity in the wordish considerations, that I think this digression will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding: which is not to take upon me to teach *Poets* how they should do, but only finding myself sick among the rest, to shew some one or two spots of the common infection grown among the most part of writers; that, acknowledging ourselves somewhat

what awry, we may bend to the right use both of *matter* and *manner*: Whereto our language giveth us great occasion, being, indeed, capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know some will say, It is a mingled language: And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say, It wanteth Grammar. Nay, truly, it hath that praise, that it wants not Grammar; for Grammar it might have, but it needs it not; being so easy in itself, and so void of those cumbersome difference of *Cases*, *Genders*, *Moods*, and *Tenses*; which, I think, was a piece of the tower of *Babylon's* curse, that a man should be put to school to learn his mother tongue. But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the mind, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world, and is particularly happy in compositions of two or three words together, near the *Greek*, far beyond the *Latin*; which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Now of verifying, there are two sorts, the one *antient*, the other *modern*; the *antient* marked the quantity of each syllable, and according to that framed his verse; the *modern*, observing only number, with some regard of the accent, the chief life of it standeth in that like sounding of the words, which we call rhyme. Whether of these be the more excellent, would bear many speeches:

speeches; the antient, no doubt, more fit for musick, both words and time observing quantity; and more fit lively to express divers passions, by the low or lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable. The latter likewise, with his rhyme striketh a certain musick to the ear; and, in fine, since it doth delight, though by another way, it obtaineth the same purpose; there being in either *sweetness*, and wanting in neither, *majesty*. Truly, the *English*, before any vulgar language, I know, is fit for both sorts; for, for the antient, the *Italian* is so full of vowels, that it must ever be cumbred with *Elisions*. The *Dutch* so, of the other side, with consonants, that they cannot yield the sweet *sliding* fit for a verse. The *French*, in his whole language, hath not one word that hath his accent in the last syllable, saving two, called *Antepenultima*; and little more hath the *Spanish*; and therefore very gracelessly may they use *Dactiles*. The *English* is subject to none of these defects.

Now for rhyme, though we do not observe *quantity*, yet we observe the *accent* very precisely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do so absolutely. That *cæsura*, or breathing-place, in the midst of the verse, neither *Italian* nor *Spanish* have, the *French*, and we never almost fail of. Lastly, even the very rhyme itself the *Italian* cannot put in the last syllable, by the *French* named the *Masculine* rhyme, but
 3 still

still in the next to the last, which the *French* call the *Female*; or the next before that, which the *Italian* calls *Sdrucchiola*: the example of the former, is *Buono, Suono*; of the *Sdrucchiola*, is *Femina, Semina*. The *French*, of the other side, hath both the *Male*, as *Bon, Son*, and the *Female*, as *Plaise, Taise*; but the *Sdrucchiola* he hath not: where the *English* hath all three, as *Due, True, Father, Rather, Motion, Potion*; with much more which might be said, but that already I find the trifling of this discourse is much too much enlarged.

So that *since* the ever praise-worthy *Poesy* is full of virtue, breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; *since* the blames laid against it are either false or feeble; *since* the cause why it is not esteemed in *England*, is the fault of Poet-apes, not Poets: *Since*, lastly, our tongue is most fit to honour *Poesy*, and to be honoured by *Poesy*; I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine *Muses*, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of *Poesy*; no more to laugh at the name of *Poets*, as though they were next inheritors to fools; no more to jest at the reverend title of a rhimer; but to *believe*, with *Aristotle*; That they were the antient treasures of the *Grecians* divinity; To *believe*, with *Bembus*, That they were first bringers in of all civility; To

To believe, with Scaliger, That no Philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man, than the reading of Virgil; To believe, with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus, That it pleased the heavenly Deity by Hesiod and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all Knowledge, Logick, Rhetorick, Philosophy Natural and Moral, and Quid non? To believe, with me, That there are many mysteries contained in Poetry, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused: To believe, with Landin, That they are so beloved of the gods, that whatsoever they write, proceeds of a divine fury. Lastly, To believe themselves, when they tell you, They will make you immortal by their verses.

Thus doing, your names shall flourish in the printers shops: Thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface: Thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all; You shall dwell upon superlatives: Thus doing, though you be *Libertino patre natus*, you shall suddenly grow *Herculeæ proles*,

Si quid mea Carmina possunt.

Thus doing, your soul shall be placed with *Dante's Beatrix*, or *Virgil's Anchises*.

But if (fie of such a *But!*) you be born so near the dull-making *Cataract* of *Nilus*, that you cannot

cannot hear the planet-like musick of *Poetry*; if you have so earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of *Poetry*, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a Mome, as to be a *Momus* of *Poetry*: Then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of *Midas*, nor to be driven by a *Poet's* verses, as *Bubonax* was, to hang himself; not to be rhimed to death, as is said to be done in *Ireland*; yet thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all *Poets*; That while you live, you live in love, and never get favour, for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an epitaph.

cannot bear the planet-like music of Poetry;
 if you have to earth-carrying a mind, that is
 cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of Poetry,
 or rather, by a certain radical disdain, will
 come such a home, as to be a Master of Poetry.
 Then, though I will not wish to you the
 ears of Adam, not to be driven by a Poet's verses,
 as Babylon was, to hang himself, not to be
 rhimed to death, as is said to be done in Babylon;
 yet thus much could I trust that you in the
 half of all Poetry; That while you live, you live
 in love, and never get beyond, for lasting still
 of a home; and when you die, you die
 in the arms of the earth, for want of a step.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

POETRY AND ELOQUENCE,

FROM

BEN JONSON'S

DISCOVERIES.

G 2

OBSERVATIONS

ON

POETRY AND ELOQUENCE

FROM

BEN JONSON'S

DISCOVERIES.

G 2

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

NOTHING in our age, I have observed, is more preposterous, than the *running judgments* upon *Poetry* and *Poets*; when we shall hear those things commended, and cried up for the best writings, which a man would scarce vouchsafe to wrap any wholesome drug in; he would never light his *tobacco* with them. And those men almost named for miracles, who are yet so vile, that if a man should go about, to examine, and correct them, he must make all they have done, but one blot. Their good is so intangled with their bad, as forcibly one must draw on the other's death with it. A sponge dipt in ink will do all:

——Comitetur punica librum

Spongia. ——

Et paulò post,

Non multæ possunt, una litura potest.

Yet their vices have not hurt them : Nay, a great many they have profited ; for they have been loved for nothing else. And this false opinion grows strong against the best men : If once it take root with the *Ignorant*. *Cestius*, in his time, was preferred to *Cicero* ; so far, as the ignorant durst. They learned him without book, and had him often in their mouths : But a man cannot imagine that thing so foolish, or rude, but will find, and enjoy an admirer ; at least, a reader, or *Spectator*. The puppets are seen now in despite of the players ; *Heath's Epigrams*, and the *Skuller's Poems* have their applause. There are never wanting, that dare prefer the worst *Preachers*, the worst *Pleaders*, the worst *Poets* : Not that the better have left to write, or speak better, but that they that hear them judge worse ; *Non illi pejus dicunt, sed hi corruptius judicant*. Nay, if it were put to the question of the Water-rimers works, against *Spencer's*, I doubt not, but they would find more *Suffrages* ; because the most favour common vices, out of a prerogative the vulgar have, to lose their judgements ; and like that which is naught.

Poetry, in this latter age, hath proved but a mean *Mistress*, to such as have wholly addicted themselves to her; or given their names up to her family. They who have but saluted her on the by, and now and then tendered their visits, she hath done much for, and advanced in the way of their own professions (both the *Law* and the *Gospel*) beyond all they could have hoped, or done for themselves, without her favour. Wherein she doth emulate the judicious, but preposterous bounty of the times *Grandeess*: Who accumulate all they can upon the *Parasite*, or *Fresh-man* in their friendship; but think an old client, or honest servant, bound by his place to write and starve.

Indeed, the multitude commend writers, as they do fencers, or wrestlers; who if they come in robustiously, and put for it, with a deal of violence, are received for the *Braver-fellows*: When many times their own rudeness is a cause of their disgrace; and a slight touch of their adversary, gives all that boisterous force the foil. But in these things, the unskilful are naturally deceived, and judging wholly by the bulk, think rude things greater than polished; and scattered more numerous, than composed: Nor think this only to be true in the sordid multitude, but the neater sort of our *Gallants*: For all are the multitude; only they differ in cloaths, not in judgment or understanding.

I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honour to *Shakespeare*, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent Speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justify mine own candour, (for I loved the man and do honour to his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any.) He was (indeed) honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent *Phantasy*; brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stopped: *Sufflaminandus erat*; as *Augustus* said of *Haterius*. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too! Many times he fell into those things, that could not escape laughter: As when he said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him; *Cæsar thou dost me wrong*. He replied, *Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause*; and such like; which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned.

In the difference of wits, I have observed, there are many notes: And it is a little *Maistry* to know them; to discern, what every nature,
 2 every

every disposition will bear : For, before we sow our land, we should plough it. There are no fewer forms of minds, than of bodies amongst us. The variety is incredible ; and therefore we must search. Some are fit to make *Divines* ; some *Poets* ; some *Lawyers* ; some *Physicians* : Some to be sent to the plough, and trades.

There is no Doctrine will do good, where Nature is wanting. Some wits are swelling and high ; others low and still : some hot and fiery, others cold and dull : one must have a bridle, the other a spur.

There be some that are forward and bold ; and these will do every little thing easily ; I mean that is hard by, and next them, which they will utter, unretarded without any shamefastness. These never perform *much*, but *quickly*. They are, what they are on the sudden ; they shew presently like *Grain*, that, scattered on the top of the ground, shoots up, but takes no root ; has a yellow blade, but the ear empty. They are wits of good promise at first, but there is an *Ingeni-stitium* : They stand still at sixteen, they get no higher.

You have others, that labour only to ostentation ; and are ever more busy about the colours and surface of a work, than in the matter and foundation : for that is hid, the other is seen.

Others,

Others, that in composition are nothing but what is rough and broken : *Quæ per salebras, atque saxa cadunt.* And if it would come gently, they trouble it of purpose. They would not have it run without rubs, as if that style were more strong and manly, that struck the ear with a kind of unevenness. These men err not by chance, but knowingly and willingly ; they are like men that affect a fashion by themselves, have some singularity in a ruff, cloak, or hat-band ; or their beards, specially cut to provoke beholders, and set a mark upon themselves. They would be reprehended, while they are looked on. And this vice, one that is in authority with the rest, loving, delivers over to them to be imitated ; so that oft-times the faults which he fell into, the others seek for : this is the danger, when vice becomes a *Precedent*.

Others there are, that have no Composition at all ; but a kind of tuning, and rhyming fall, in what they write. It runs and slides, and only makes a sound. *Womens-Poets* they are called, as you have *Womens-Tailors*.

*They write a verse, as smooth, as soft, as cream ;
In which there is no torrent, nor scarce stream.*

You may sound these wits, and find the depth of them, with your middle finger. They are *Cream-bowl*, or but puddle.

Some

Some that turn over all books, and are equally searching in all papers, that write out of what they presently find or meet, without choice; by which means it happens, that what they have discredited, and impugned in one work, they have before, or after extolled the same in another. Such are all the *Essayists*, even their master *Montaigne*. These in all they write, confess still what books they have read last; and therein their own folly, so much, that they bring it to the *Stake* raw and undigested: not that the place did need it neither; but that they thought themselves furnished and would vent it.

Some again (who after they have got authority, or, which is less, opinion, by their writings, to have read much) dare presently to feign whole books and authors, and lye safely. For what never was, will not easily be found; not by the most *Curious*.

And some, by a cunning protestation against all reading, and false venditation of their own *Naturals*, think to divert the *Sagacity* of their readers from themselves, and cool the scent of their own *Fox-like* thefts; when yet they are so rank, as a man may find whole pages together usurped from one author. Their necessities compelling them to read for present use, which could not be in many books; and so come forth more ridiculously, and palpably guilty than those,

those, who because they cannot grace, they yet would slander their industry.

But the wretched are the obstinate contempters of all helps and arts; such as presuming on their own *Naturals* (which perhaps are excellent) dare deride all diligence, and seem to mock at the terms, when they understand not the things; thinking that way to get off wittily, with their ignorance. These are imitated often by such as are their peers in negligence, though they cannot be in nature: and they utter all they can think, with a kind of violence and *Indisposition*; unexamined, without relation, either to person, place, or any fitness else; and the more wilful and stubborn they are in it, the more learned they are esteemed of the *Multitude*, through their excellent vice of judgment: who think those things the stronger that have no art; as if to break, were better than to open; or to rent asunder, gentler than to loose.

It cannot but come to pass, that these men, who commonly seek to do more than enough, may sometimes happen on something that is good and great; but very seldom: and when it comes, it doth not recompence the rest of their ill. For their jests, and their sentences, (which they only, and ambitiously seek for) stick out, and are more eminent; because all is sordid, and vile about them; as lights are more discerned

cerned in a thick darkness, than a faint shadow. Now because they speak all they can (however unfitly) they are thought to have the greater copy ; where the learned use ever election, and a mean ; they look back to what they intended at first, and make all an even and proportioned body. The true artificer will not run away from nature, as he were afraid of her ; or depart from life, and the likeness of truth ; but speak to the capacity of his hearers. And though his language differ from the vulgar somewhat, it shall not fly from all humanity, with the *Tamer-lanes*, and *Tamer-Chams* of the late age, which had nothing in them but the *scenical* strutting, and furious vociferation, to warrant them to the ignorant gapers. He knows it is his only art, so to carry it, as none but artificers perceive it. In the mean time, perhaps, he is called barren, dull, lean, a poor writer, (or by what contumelious word can come in their cheeks) by these men, who without labour, judgment, knowledge, or almost sense, are received or preferred before him. He gratulates them, and their fortune. Another age, or juster men, will acknowledge the virtues of his studies, his wisdom in dividing, his subtlety in arguing, with what strength he doth inspire his readers, with what sweetness he strokes them ; in inveighing, what sharpness ; in jest, what urbanity he uses : how he doth reign in
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mens affections ; how invade, and break in upon them ; and makes their minds like the thing he writes. Then in his elocution, to behold, what word is proper, which hath ornaments, which height, what is beautifully translated, where figures are fit, which gentle, which strong to shew the composition *manly* : And how he hath avoided faint, obscure, obscene, fordid, humble, improper, or effeminate *Phrase* ; which is not only praised of the most, but commended (which is worse) especially for that it is naught.

I know no disease of the *Soul*, but *Ignorance* ; not of the arts and sciences, but of itself : Yet relating to those it is a pernicious *Evil*, the darkner of man's life, the disturber of his *Reason*, and common confounder of *Truth* ; with which a man goes groping in the dark, no otherwise than if he were blind. Great understandings are most wracked and troubled with it : nay, sometimes they will rather chuse to die, than not to know the things they study for. Think then what an evil it is, and what good the contrary.

Knowledge is the action of the *Soul*, and is perfect without the *Senses*, as having the seeds of all *Science* and *Virtue* in itself ; but not without the service of the *Senses* ; by those *Organs* the *Soul* works : she is a perpetual agent, prompt and subtle ; but often flexible, and erring, intangling herself like a silk-worm : but her *Reason*

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son is a weapon with two edges, and cuts through. In her indagations oft-times new scents put her by, and she takes in errors into her, by the same conduits she doth truths.

Ease and relaxation are profitable to all studies. The mind is like a bow, the stronger by being unbent. But the temper in spirits is all, when to command a man's wit, when to favour it. I have known a man vehement on both sides, that knew no mean, either to intermit his studies, or call upon them again. When he hath set himself to writing, he would join night to day, press upon himself without release, not minding it till he fainted; and when he left off, resolve himself into all sports, and looseness again, that it was almost a despair to draw him to his book: but once got to it, he grew stronger, and more earnest by the ease. His whole powers were renewed; he would work out of himself what he desired; but with such excess, as his study could not be ruled; he knew not how to dispose his own abilities, or husband them, he was of that immoderate power against himself. Nor was he only a strong, but an absolute *Speaker* and *Writer*: but his subtlety did not shew itself; his judgment thought that a vice: for the ambush hurts more that is hid. He never forced his language, nor went out of the highway of *Speaking*, but for some great necessity, or apparent profit: for he
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denied *Figures* to be invented for ornament, but for aid ; and still thought it an extreme madness to bend, or wrest, that which ought to be right.

It is no *wonder*, mens eminence appears but in their own way. *Virgil's* felicity left him in prose, as *Tully's* forsook him in verse. *Salust's* Orations are read in the honour of story ; yet the most eloquent *Plato's* speech, which he made for *Socrates*, is neither worthy of the *Patron*, or the *Person* defended. Nay, in the same kind of *Oratory*, and where the matter is one, you shall have him that reasons strongly, open negligently ; another that prepares well, not finish so well : And this happens not only to brains, but to bodies. One can wrestle well ; another run well ; a third leap, or throw the bar ; a fourth lift, or stop a cart going : Each hath his way of strength. So in other creatures ; some dogs are for the deer, some for the wild boar, some are fox-hounds, some otter-hounds. Nor are all horses for the cart, and paniers.

I have known many excellent men, that would speak suddenly to the admiration of their hearers ; who upon study and premeditation have been forsaken by their own wits, and no way answered their fame : their eloquence was greater than their reading ; and the things they uttered, better than those they knew : their fortune deserved better of them, than their care.

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For men of present spirits, and of greater wits than study, do please more in the things they invent, than in those they bring. And I have heard some of them compelled to speak, out of necessity, that have so infinitely exceeded themselves, as it was better, both for them and their auditory, that they were so surprized, not prepared. Nor was it safe then to cross them, for their adversary, their anger made them more eloquent. Yet these men I could not but love and admire, that they returned to their studies. They left not diligence (as many do) when their rashness prospered; for diligence is a great aid, even to an indifferent wit: when we are not contented with the examples of our own age, but would know the face of the former. Indeed, the more we confer with, the more we profit by, if the persons be chosen.

One, though he be excellent, and the chief, is not to be imitated alone: for no imitator ever grew up to his author; likeness is always on this side truth. Yet there happened in my time one noble *Speaker*, who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language (where he could spare, or pass by a jest) was nobly *censorious*. No man ever spake more neatly, more prestly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech, but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough, or look aside from him,

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him, without loss. He commanded where he spoke; and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man that heard him, was, lest he should make an end.

Cicero is said to be the only wit, that the people of *Rome* had equalled to their empire. *Ingenium par imperio*. We have had many, and in their several ages, (to take in but the former *Seculum*) *Sir Thomas More*, the elder *Wiat*, *Henry Earl of Surry*, *Chaloner*, *Smith*, *Eliot*, *B. Gardiner*, were for their times admirable; and the more, because they began eloquence with us. *Sir Nicolas Bacon* was singular, and almost alone, in the beginning of *Queen Elizabeth's* time. *Sir Philip Sidney*, and *Mr. Hooker*, (in different matter) grew great masters of wit and language, and in whom all vigour of invention, and strength of judgment met. The *Earl of Essex*, noble and high; and *Sir Walter Raleigh*, not to be contemned, either for judgment or style; *Sir Henry Savile*, grave, and truly lettered; *Sir Edwin Sandys*, excellent in both; *Lord Egerton*, the chancellor, a grave and great orator; and best, when he was provoked. But his learned and able (though unfortunate) Successor, is he who hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue, which may be compared, or preferred, either to insolent *Greece*,

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or haughty *Rome*. In short, within his view, and about his times, were all the wits born, that could honour a language, or help study. Now things daily fall: Wits grow downward, and *Eloquence* grows backward: so that he may be named, and stand as the *mark* and *αἴμα* of our language.

I have ever observed it to have been the office of a wise patriot, among the greatest affairs of the *State*, to take care of the *Common-wealth* of Learning. For schools, they are the *Seminaries* of state; and nothing is worthier the study of a statesman, than that part of the *Republick*, which we call the *Advancement* of Letters. Witness the care of *Julius Cæsar*, who in the heat of the civil war writ his books of *Analogy*, and dedicated them to *Tully*. This made the late Lord *St. Alban* entitle his work, *Novum Organum*; which though by the most of superficial men, who cannot get beyond the title of *Nominals*, it is not penetrated, nor understood; it really openeth all defects of learning whatsoever, and is a book,

Qui longum noto scriptori porriget ævum.

My conceit of his person was never increased toward him by his place, or honours: but I have, and do reverence him, for the Greatness that was only proper to himself, in that he

seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed, that *God* would give him strength; for *Greatness* he could not want. Neither could I condole in a word or syllable for him; as knowing no accident could do harm to virtue, but rather help to make it manifest.

There cannot be one colour of the mind, another of the wit. If the mind be staid, grave, and composed, the wit is so; that vitiated, the other is blown and deflowered. Do we not see, if the mind languish, the members are dull? Look upon an effeminate person; his very gate confesseth him. If a man be fiery, his motion is so; if angry, 'tis troubled and violent. So that we may conclude, wheresoever manners and fashions are corrupted, language is. It imitates the publick riot. The excess of feasts and apparel are the notes of a sick state; and the wantonness of language, of a sick mind.

Poetry and *Picture*, are arts of a like nature; and both are busy about imitation. It was excellently said of *Plutarch*, *Poetry* was a speaking picture, and *Picture* a mute poesy. For they both invent, feign, and devise many things, and accommodate all they invent to the use and service of Nature. Yet of the two, the pen is more noble than the pencil. For that can speak to the understanding; the other, but to the sense.

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They both behold pleasure and profit, as their common object; but should abstain from all base pleasures, lest they should err from their end: And while they seek to better mens minds, destroy their manners. They both are born *Artificers*, not made. Nature is more powerful in them than study.

Whosoever loves not *Picture*, is injurious to truth: and all the wisdom of *Poetry*. *Picture* is the invention of Heaven; the most antient, and most a-kin to Nature. It is itself a silent work: and always of one and the same habit: Yet it doth so enter, and penetrate the inmost affection (being done by an excellent artificer) as sometimes it overcomes the power of speech and oratory. There are divers graces in it; so are there in the artificers. One excels in care, another in reason, a third in easiness, a fourth in nature and grace. Some have diligence and comeliness; but they want majesty. They can express a human form in all the graces, sweetness, and elegancy; but they miss the authority. They can hit nothing but smooth cheeks; they cannot express roughness or gravity. Others aspire to truth so much, as they are rather lovers of likeness than beauty. *Zeuxis* and *Parrhasius*, are said to be contemporaries: The first, found out the reason of lights and shadows in picture: The other more subtly examined the lines.

In *Picture*, light is required no less than shadow : so in stile, height, as well as humbleness. But beware they be not too humble : as *Pliny* pronounced of *Regulus's* writings. You would think them written, not on a child, but by a child. Many, out of their own obscene apprehensions, refuse proper and sweet words ; as *Occupy*, *Nature*, and the like : so the curious industry in some of having all alike good, hath come nearer a vice than a virtue.

Picture took heir feigning from *Poetry* ; from *Geometry* her rule, compass, lines, proportion, and the whole *Symmetry*. *Parrhasius* was the first won reputation, by adding *Symmetry* to picture : he added subtlety to the countenance, elegance to the hair, love-lines to the face ; and by the publick voice of all artificers, deserved honour in the outer lines. *Eupompus* gave it splendour by numbers, and other elegancies. From the *Opticks* it drew reasons ; by which it considered, how things placed at distance, and afar off, should appear less : how above, or beneath the head, should deceive the eye, &c. So from thence it took shadows, recessor, light, and heightnings. From moral *Philosophy* it took the soul, the expression of senses, perturbations, manners : when they would paint an angry person, a proud, an inconstant, an ambitious, a brave, a magnanimous, a just, a merciful, a compassionate, an humble, a dejected, a base, and

and the like ; they made all heightnings bright, all shadows dark, all swellings from a plane ; all solids from breaking. See where *Pliny* complains of their painting *Chimæra's*, by the vulgar unaptly called *Grotesque* : saying that men who were born truly to study and emulate Nature, did nothing but make monsters against Nature ; which *Horace* so laugh at. The art *Plastick* was moulding in clay, or potters earth antiently. This is the parent of *Statuary*, *Sculpture*, *Graving* and *Picture* ; cutting in brasse and marble, all serve under her. *Socrates* taught *Parrhasius* and *Clito* (two noble statuaries) first to express manners by their looks in imagery. *Polygnotus* and *Aglaophon* were antienter. After them *Zeuxis*, who was the law-giver to all painters : after *Parrhasius*. They were contemporaries, and lived both about *Philip's* time, the father of *Alexander* the Great. There lived in this latter age six famous painters in *Italy*, who were excellent, and emulous of the antients : *Raphael de Urbino*, *Michel Angelo Buonarota*, *Titian*, *Anthony of Correggio*, *Sebastian of Venice*, *Julio Romano*, and *Andrea del Sarto*.

For a man to write well, there are required three necessaries. To read the best authors ; observe the best speakers ; and much exercise of his own stile. In stile to consider, what ought to be written ; and after what manner ; he must first think, and excogitate his matter ;

then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing, and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely; and to do this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the stile be at first, so it be laboured and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words, that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent; and order what we approve. Repeat often, what we have formerly written; which beside, that it helps the consequence, and makes the juncture better, it quickens the heat of imagination, that often cools in the time of setting down, and gives it new strength, as if it grew lustier, by the going back. As we see in the contention of leaping, they jump farthest, that fetch their race largest: or, as in throwing a dart or javelin, we force back our arms, to make our loose the stronger. Yet, if we have a fair gale of wind, I forbid not the steering out of our sail, so the favour of the gale deceive us not. For all that we invent doth please us in the conception or birth; else we would never set it down. But the safest is to return to our judgment, and handle over again those things, the easiness of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers in their beginnings; they imposed upon themselves care and industry. They did nothing rashly. They obtained first to write well, and then

then custom made it easy and a habit. By little and little, their matter shewed itself to them more plentifully; their words answered, their composition followed; and all, as in a well-ordered family, presented itself in the place. So that the sum of all is: ready writing makes not good writing; but good writing brings on ready writing: yet when we think we have got the faculty, it is even then good to resist it; as to give a horse a check sometimes with a bit, which doth not so much stop his course, as stir his mettle. Again, whether a man's *Genius* is best able to reach thither, it should more and more contend, lift and dilate itself, as men of low stature, raise themselves on their toes; and so oft-times get even, if not eminent. Besides, as it is fit for grown and able writers to stand of themselves, and work with their own strength, to trust and endeavour by their own faculties: so it is fit for the beginner, and learner, to study others, and the best. For the mind, and memory, are more sharply exercised in comprehending another man's things, than our own; and such as accustom themselves, and are familiar with the best authors, shall ever and anon find somewhat of themselves, and in the expression of their minds, even when they feel it not, be able to utter something like theirs, which hath an authority above their own. Nay, sometimes it is the reward of a man's study, the praise

praise of quoting another man fitly : and though a man be more prone, and able for one kind of writing than another, yet he must exercise all. For as in an instrument, so in stile, there must be a harmony, and consent of parts.

I take this labour in teaching others, that they should not be always to be taught : and I would bring my precepts into practice. For rules are ever of less force, and value, than experiments. Yet with this purpose, rather to shew the right way to those that come after, than to detect any that have slipt before by error, and I hope it will be more profitable. For men do more willingly listen, and with more favour to precept, than reprehension. Among divers opinions of an art, and most of them contrary in themselves, it is hard to make election ; and therefore, though a man cannot invent new things after so many, he may do a welcome work yet to help posterity to judge rightly of the old. But arts and precepts avail nothing, except Nature be beneficial and aiding. And therefore these things are no more written to a dull disposition, than rules of husbandry to a foil. No precepts will profit a fool ; no more than beauty will the blind, or musick the deaf. As we should take care, that our stile in writing, be neither dry, nor empty : we should look again it be not winding, or wanton with far-fetcht-descriptions ; either is a vice.

vice. But that is worse which proceeds out of want, than that which riots out of plenty. The remedy of fruitfulness is easy; but no labour will help the contrary; I will like and praise some things in a young writer; which yet if he continue in, I cannot, but justly hate him for the same. There is a time to be given all things for maturity; and that even your country husband-man can teach; who to a young plant will not put the pruning knife, because it seems to fear the iron, as not able to admit the scar. No more would I tell a green writer all his faults, lest I should make him grieve and faint, and at last despair. For nothing doth more hurt, than to make him so afraid of all things, as he can endeavour nothing. Therefore youth ought to be instructed betimes, and in the best things; for we hold those longest, we take soonest. As the first scent of a vessel lasts; and the tinct the wool first receives. Therefore a master should temper his own powers, and descend to the other's infirmity. If you pour a glut of water upon a bottle, it receives little of it; but with a funnel, and by degrees, you shall fill many of them, and spill little of your own; to their capacity they will all receive and be full. And as it is fit to read the best authors to youth first, so let them be of the openest, and clearest. As *Livy* before *Salust*, *Sydney* before *Donne*; and beware of letting them

them taste *Gower*, or *Chaucer* at first, lest falling too much in love with antiquity, and not apprehending the weight, they grow rough and barren in language only. When their judgments are firm, and out of danger, let them read both, the old and the new; but no less take heed, that their new flowers, and sweetness do not as much corrupt, as the others driness, and squallor, if they chuse not carefully. *Spenser*, in affecting the ancients, writ no language: yet I would have him read for his matter; but as *Virgil* read *Ennius*. The reading of *Homer* and *Virgil* is counfelled by *Quintilian*, as the best way of informing youth, and confirming man. For besides that, the mind is raised with the height and sublimity of such a verse, it takes spirit from the greatness of the matter, and is tinged with the best things. *Tragick*, and *Lyrick Poetry* is good too; and *Comick* with the best, if the manners of the reader be once in safety. In the *Greek* poets, as also in *Plautus*, we shall see the œconomy, and disposition of *Poems*, better observed than in *Terence*, and the latter; who thought the sole grace, and virtue of their fable, the sticking in of sentences, as ours do the forcing in of jests.

We should not protect our sloth with the patronage of difficulty. It is a false quarrel against Nature, that she helps understanding but in a few; when the most part of mankind are inclined

inclined by her thither, if they would take the pains; no less than birds to fly, horses to run, &c. Which if they lose, it is through their own sluggishness, and by that means become her prodigies, not her children. I confess, Nature in children is more patient of labour in study, than in age; for the sense of the pain, the judgment of the labour is absent, they do not measure what they have done. And it is the thought, and consideration, that affects us more, than the weariness itself. *Plato* was not content with the learning, that *Athens* could give him, but sailed into *Italy* for *Pythagoras's* knowledge: and yet not thinking himself sufficiently informed, went into *Egypt* to the priests, and learned their mysteries. He laboured, so must we. Many things may be learned together, and performed in one point of time; as musicians exercise their memory, their voice, their fingers, and sometime their head, and feet at once. And so a preacher in the invention of matter, election of words, composition of gesture, look, pronounciation, motion, useth all these faculties at once. And if we can express this variety together, why should not divers studies, at divers hours, delight, when the variety is able alone to refresh, and repair us? As when a man is weary of writing, to read; and then again of reading, to write. Wherein, howsoever we do many things, yet are we
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(in a fort) still fresh to what we begin ; we are recreated with change, as the stomach is with meats. But some will say, this variety breeds confusion, and makes, that either we lose all, or hold no more than the last. Why do we not then persuade husbandmen, that they should not till land, help it with marle, lyme, and compost ? Plant hop gardens, prune trees, look to beehives, rear sheep, and all other cattle at once ? It is easier to do many things and continue, than to do one thing long.

It is not the passing through these learnings that hurts us, but the dwelling and sticking about them. To descend to those extreme anxieties, and foolish cavils of *Grammarians*, is able to break a wit in pieces ; being a work of manifold misery and vaineſs, to be *Elementariiſenes*. Yet even letters are as it were the bank of words, and reſtore themſelves to an author, as the pawns of language : but talking and eloquence are not the ſame : to ſpeak, and to ſpeak well, are two things. A fool may talk, but a wiſe man ſpeaks, and out of the obſervation, knowledge, and uſe of things ; many writers perplex their readers, and hearers with meer *nouſenſe*. Their writings need ſun-ſhine. Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and cuſtomary. A barbarous phraſe hath often made me out of love with a good ſenſe ; and doubtful writing hath wrackt me beyond my patience.

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The reason why a *Poet* is said, that he ought to have all knowledges, is that he should not be ignorant of the most, especially of those he will handle. And indeed, when the attaining of them is possible, it were a sluggish and base thing to despair. For frequent imitation of any thing, becomes a habit quickly. If a man should prosecute as much, as could be said of every thing; his work would find no end.

Speech is the only benefit man hath to express his excellency of mind above other creatures. It is the instrument of *Society*. Therefore, *Mercury*, who is the president of language, is called *Deorum hominumque interpres*. In all speech, words and sense, are as the body and the soul. The sense is, as the life and soul of language, without which all words are dead. Sense is wrought out of experience, the knowledge of human life and actions, or of the liberal arts which the *Greeks* called *Ἐγκυκλοπαιδείαν*. Words are the peoples, yet there is a choice of them to be made. For *Verborum delectus origo est eloquentiæ*. They are to be chose according to the persons we make speak, or the things we speak of. Some are of the camp, some of the council-board, some of the shop, some of the sheep-coat, some of the pulpit, some of the bar, &c. And herein is seen their elegance, and propriety, when we use them fitly, and draw them forth to their just strength and nature, by way

way of translation or *Metaphor*. But in this translation we must only serve necessity (*Nam temerè nihil transfertur à prudenti*) or commodity, which is a kind of necessity; that is, when we either absolutely want a word to express by, and that is necessity; or when we have not so fit a word, and that is commodity. As when we avoid loss by it, and escape obsceneness, and gain in the grace and property which helps significance. *Metaphors* far-fetcht hinder to be understood, and affected, lose their grace. Or when the person fetcheth his translations from a wrong place. As if a *privy-counsellor* should at the table take his *metaphor* from a dicing-house, or ordinary, or a vintner's vault; or a *justice* of peace draw his similitudes from the *Mathematics*; or a *Divine* from a bawdy-house, or taverns; or a *gentleman* of *Northampton-shire*, *Warwickshire*, or the *Mid-land*, should fetch all his illustrations to his country neighbours from shipping, and tell them of the Main-sheet, and the Boulin. *Metaphors* are thus many times deformed, as in him that said, *Castratam morte Africani Rempublicam*. And another, *stercus curiæ Glauciam*. And *canâ nive conspuat Alpes*. All attempts that are new in this kind, are dangerous and somewhat hard, before they be softened with use. A man coins not a new word without some peril, and less fruit; for if it happen to be received, the praise is but moderate; if refused,

refused, the scorn is assured. Yet we must adventure, for things at first, hard and rough, are by use made tender and gentle. It is an honest error that is committed, following great *Chiefs*.

Custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the publick stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining. Nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chief virtue of a stile is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it, as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity, do lend a kind of majesty to stile, and are not without their delight some times. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newness of the past language is the best. For what was the antient language, which some men so doat upon, but the antient custom? Yet when I name custom, I understand not the vulgar custom: for that were a precept no less dangerous to language, than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: but that I call custom of speech, which is the consent of the learned; as custom of life, which is the consent of the good. *Virgil* was most loving of antiquity; yet how rarely doth he insert *aquai*, and *piclai*! *Lucretius* is scabrous and rough in these; he seeks them: as some do *Chaucerisms* with us, which were

better expunged and banished. Some words are to be culled out for ornament and colour, as we gather flowers to strow houses, or make garlands; but they are better when they grow to our stile; as in a meadow, where though the meer grass and greenness delights; yet the variety of flowers doth heighten and beautify. Marry we must not play, or riot too much with them, as in *Paranomasies*: Nor use too swelling or ill sounding words; *Quæ per salebras, atque saxa cadunt*. It is true, there is no sound but shall find some lovers, as the bitterest confections are grateful to some palates. Our composition must be more accurate in the beginning and end, than in the midst; and in the end, more than in the beginning; for through the midst, the stream bears us. And this is attained by custom more than care, or diligence. We must express readily, and fully, not profusely. There is difference between a liberal and prodigal hand. As it is a great point of art, when our matter requires it, to enlarge, and veer out all sail: so to take it in, and contract it, is of no less praise when the argument doth ask it. Either of them hath their fitness in the place. A good man always profits by his endeavour, by his help; yea, when he is absent; nay, when he is dead by his example and memory. So good authors in their stile. A strict and succinct stile is that, where you can take away nothing without loss, and

and that losse to be manifest. The brief style is that which expresth much in little. The concise style, which expresth not enough, but leaves somewhat to be understood. The abrupt style, which hath many breaches, and doth not seem to end, but fall. The congruent, and harmonious fitting of parts in a sentence, hath almost the fastening, and force of knitting, and connexion : as in stones well squared, which will rise strong a great way without mortar. Periods are beautiful, when they are not too long ; for so they have their strength too, as in a pike or javelin. As we must take the care that our words and sense be clear ; so if the obscurity happen through the hearers, or readers want of understanding, I am not to answer for them ; no more than for their not listening or marking ; I must neither find them ears, nor mind. But a man cannot put a word so in fence, but something about it will illustrate it, if the writer understand himself. For order helps much to perspicuity, as confusion hurts. *Rectitudo lucem adfert ; obliquitas & circumductio ofuscat.* We should therefore speak what we can, the nearest way, so as we keep our gate not leap ; for too short may as well be not let into the memory, as too long not kept in. Whatsoever loseth the grace, and clearness, converts into a riddle ; the obscurity is marked, but not the value. That perisheth, and is past by, like the

pearl in the fable. Our style should be like a skein of silk to be carried, and found by the right thread, not ravelled, and perplexed; then all is a knot, a heap. There are words, that do as much raise a style, as others can depress it. Superlative, and over-muchness amplifies. It may be above faith, but never above a mean. It was ridiculous in *Cestius*, when he said of *Alexander*:

Fremet Oceanus, quasi indignetur, quod terras relinquo;

But propitiously from *Virgil*:

— *Credas innare revulsas Cycladas.*

He doth not say it *was* so, but *seemed* to be so. Although it be somewhat incredible, that is excused before it be spoken. But there are *Hyperboles*, which will become one language, that will by no means admit another. As *Eos esse P. R. exercitus, qui cælum possint percurrere*: Who would say with us, but a mad man. Therefore we must consider in every tongue what is used, what received. *Quintilian* warns us, that in no kind of *Translation*, or *Metaphor*, or *Allegory*, we make a turn from what we began; as if we fetch the original of our *Metaphor* from sea, and billows; we end not in flames and ashes; It is a most foul inconsequence.

Neither

Neither must we draw out our *Allegory* too long, lest either we make ourselves obscure, or fall into affectation, which is childish. But why do men depart at all from the right, and natural ways of speaking? Sometimes for necessity, when we are driven, or think it fitter to speak that in obscure words, or by circumstance, which uttered plainly would offend the hearers. Or to avoid obsceneness, or sometimes for pleasure, and variety; as travellers turn out of the highway, drawn, either by the commodity of a foot-path, or the delicacy, or freshness of the fields. And all this is called *εὐχρηματισμένη*, or figured language.

Language most shews a man: speak that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's form, or likeness, so true as his speech. Nay, it is likened to a man; and as we consider feature, and composition in a man; so words in language: in the greatness, aptness, sound, structure, and harmony of it. Some men are tall, and big; so some language is high and great. Then the words are chosen, their sound ample, the composition full, the abfolution plenteous, and poured out, all grave, finewy and strong. Some are little, and dwarfs; so of speech it is humble, and low, the words poor and flat; the members and *periods*, thin and

weak, without knitting, or number. The middle are of a just stature. There the language is plain, and pleasing: even without stopping, round without swelling; all well-turned composed, elegant, and accurate. The vicious language is vast, and gaping, swelling, and irregular; when it contends to be high, full of rock, mountain, and pointed reefs: As it affects to be low, it is abject, and creeps, full of bogs, and holes. And according to their subject, these styles vary, and lose their names: for that which is high and lofty, declaring excellent matter, becomes vast and tumorous, speaking of petty and inferior things: so that which was even, and apt, in a mean and plain subject, will appear most poor and humble in a high argument. Would you not laugh, to meet a great counsellor of state in a flat cap, with his trunk hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, his gloves under his girdle, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown, furred with fables? There is a certain latitude in these things, by which we find the degrees.

The next thing to the *stature*, is the *figure* and feature in language: that is, whether it be round, and straight, which consists of short and succinct *Periods*, numerous and polished: or square and firm; which is to have equal and strong parts, every where answerable and weighed.

The

The third is the skin and coat, which rests in the well joining, cementing, and coagmentation of words; when as it is smooth, gentle, and sweet; like a table, upon which you may run your finger without rubs, and your nail cannot find a joint; nor horrid, rough, wrinkled, gaping, or chapt: after these the flesh, blood, and bones come in question. We say, it is a fleshy style, when there is much *Periphrases*, and circuit of words; and when with more than enough, it grows fat and corpulent; *Arvina Orationis*, full of suet and tallow. It hath blood, and juice, when the words are proper and apt, their sound sweet, and the *Phrase* neat and picked. *Oratio uncta, & benè pasta*. But where there is redundancy, both the blood and juice are faulty and vicious. *Redundat sanguine, quia multò plus dicit quàm necesse est*. Juice in language is somewhat less than blood; for if the words be but becoming, and signifying, and the sense gentle, there is juice: but where that wanteth, the language is thin, flagging, poor, starved; scarce covering the bone, and shews, like stones in a sack. Some men, to avoid redundancy, run into that; and while they strive to have no ill blood, or juice, they lose their good. There be some styles again, that have not less blood, but less flesh and corpulence. These are bony and finewy: *Ossa habent, & nervos*.

It was well noted by the late Lord St. *Alban*, that the study of words is the first distemper of learning : vain matter the second : and a third distemper is deceit, or the likeness of truth ; imposture held up by credulity. All these are the cobwebs of learning, and to let them grow in us, is either stultish or foolish. Nothing is more ridiculous, than to make an author a *Dictator*, as the schools have done *Aristotle*. The damage is infinite, knowledge receives by it. For to many things a man should owe but a temporary belief, and suspension of his own judgment, not an absolute resignation of himself, or a perpetual captivity. Let *Aristotle* and others have their dues ; but if we can make farther discoveries of truth and fitness than they, why are we envied ? Let us beware, while we strive to add, we do not diminish, or deface ; we may improve, but not augment. By discrediting falshood, truth grows in request. We must not go about, like men anguished and perplexed, for vicious affectation of praise : but calmly study the separation of opinions, find the errors have intervened, awake antiquity, call former times into question ; but make no parties with the present, nor follow any fierce undertakers, mingle no matter of doubtful credit with the simplicity of truth, but gently stir the mold about the root of the question, and avoid all digladiations ; facility of credit,
or

or superstitious simplicity ; seek the consonancy, and concatenation of truth ; stoop only to point of necessity, and what leads to convenience. Then make exact animadversion where style hath degenerated, where flourished and thrived in choiceness of praise, round and clean composition of sentence, sweet falling of the clause, varying an illustration by tropes and figures, weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, and depth of judgment. This is *monte potiri*, to get the hill. For no perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or a level.

Now, that I have informed you in the knowing these things, let me lead you by the hand a little farther, in the direction of the use ; and make you an able writer by practice. The conceits of the mind are pictures of things, and the tongue is the interpreter of those pictures. The order of God's creatures in themselves, is not only admirable and glorious, but eloquent : then he who could apprehend the consequence of things in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly, were the best writer or speaker. Therefore *Cicero* said much, when he said, *Dicere rectè nemo potest, nisi qui prudenter intelligit*. The shame of speaking unskilfully were small, if the tongue only thereby were disgraced : but as the image of a *King*, in his seal ill represented, is not so much a blemish to the
the

the wax, or the signet that sealed it, as to the prince it representeth; so disordered speech is not so much injury to the lips that give it forth, as to the disproportion and incoherence of things in themselves, so negligently expressed. Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune, whose words do jar; nor his reason in frame, whose sentence is preposterous; nor his elocution clear and perfect, whose utterance breaks itself into fragments and uncertainties: Were it not a dishonour to a mighty prince, to have the majesty of his embassage spoiled by a careless ambassador? and is it not as great an indignity, that an excellent conceit and capacity, by the indiligence of an idle tongue should be disgraced? Negligent speech doth not only discredit the person of the speaker, but it discrediteth the opinion of his reason and judgment; it discrediteth the force and uniformity of the matter and substance.

We have spoken sufficiently of oratory; let us now make a diversion to *Poetry*. *Poetry* in the primogeniture had many peccant humours, and is made to have more now, through the levity and inconstancy of mens judgments. Whereas indeed, it is the most prevailing eloquence, and of the most exalted *character*. Now the discredits and disgraces are many it hath received, through mens study of deprivation or calumny; their practice being to give it diminution of credit, by lessening the professors estimation,

estimation, and making the age afraid of their liberty : and the age is grown so tender of her fame, as she calls all writings *Aspersions*.

That is the state word, the phrase of court, (*Placentia College*) which some call *Parasites Place*, the inn of *Ignorance*.

Whilst I name no persons, but deride follies ; why should any man confess, or betray himself ? why doth not that of S. *Hierome* come into their mind ; *Ubi generalis est de vitiis disputatio, ibi nullius esse personæ injuriam* ? It is such an inexpressible crime in *Poets*, to tax vices generally ; and no offence in them, who, by their exception, confess they have committed them particularly. Are we fallen into those times that we must not

Auriculas teneras mordaci rodere vero ?

Remedii votum semper verius erat, quàm spes. If men may by no means write freely, or speak truth, but when it offends not ; why do *Physicians* cure with sharp medicines, or corrosives ? is not the same equally lawful in the cure of the mind, that is in the cure of the body ? Some vices (you will say) are so foul, that it is better they should be done than spoken. But they that take offence where no name, character, or signature doth blazon them, seem to me like affected as women ; who, if they hear any thing
ill

ill spoken of the ill of their sex, are presently moved, as if the contumely respected their particular : and, on the contrary, when they hear good of good women, conclude, that it belongs to them all. If I see any thing that toucheth me, shall I come forth a betrayer of myself presently ? No ; if I be wise, I will dissemble it ; if honest, I will avoid it ; lest I publish that on my own forehead, which I saw there noted without a title. A man that is on the mending hand, will either ingenuously confess, or wisely dissemble his disease. And the wise and virtuous will never think any thing belongs to themselves that is written, but rejoice that the good are warned not to be such ; and the ill to leave to be such. The person offended hath no reason to be offended with the writer, but with himself ; and so to declare that properly to belong to him, which was so spoken of all men, as it could be no man's several, but his that would wilfully and desperately claim it. It sufficeth, I know, what kind of persons I displease, men bred in the declining and decay of virtue, betrothed to their own vices ; that have abandoned, or prostituted their good names : hungry and ambitious of infamy, invested in all deformity, enthralled to ignorance and malice, of a hidden and concealed malignity, and that hold a concomitancy with all evil.

What

What is a Poet?

A *Poet* is that which by the *Greeks* is called κατ' ἐξοχήν, ὁ Ποιητής, a *maker*, or a *feigner*: his art, an art of imitation or feigning; expressing the life of man in fit measure, numbers and harmony, according to *Aristotle*: from the word ποιεῖν, which signifies to make, or feign. Hence he is called a *Poet*, not he which writeth in measure only, but that feigneth and formeth a fable, and writes things like the truth. For the *fable* and *fiction* is (as it were) the form and soul of any poetical work, or *Poem*.

What mean you by a Poem?

A *Poem* is not alone any work, or composition of the poets in many, or few verses; but even one alone verse sometimes makes a perfect *Poem*. As when *Aeneas* hangs up, and consecrates the arms of *Abas* with this inscription;

Aeneas hæc de Danais victoribus arma.

And calls it a *Poem*, or *Carmen*. Such are those in *Martial*:

Omnia, Castor, emis: Sic fiet, ut omnia vendas.

And,

Pauper videri Cinna vult, & est pauper.

So were *Horace's Odes* called, *Carmina*; his *Lyrick*, Songs. And *Lucretius* designs a whole book, in his sixth:

Quod in primo quoque carmine claret.

And anciently, all the oracles were called *Carmina*; or, whatever sentence was expressed, were it much, or little, it was called, an *Epick*, *Dramatick*, *Lyrick*, *Elegiack*, or *Epigrammatick Poem*.

But, how differs a Poem from what we call Poesy?

A *Poem*, as I have told you, is the work of the poet; the end and fruit of his labour and study. *Poesy* is his skill, or craft of making: The very fiction itself, the reason, or form of the work. And these three voices differ, as the thing done, the doing, and the doer; the thing feigned, the feigning, and the feigner; so the *Poem*, the *Poesy*, and the *Poet*. Now the *Poesy* is the habit, or the art; nay, rather the queen of arts: which had her original from Heaven, received thence from the *Hebrezes*, and had in prime estimation with the *Greeks*, transmitted to the *Latins*, and all nations that professed civility. The study of it (if we will trust *Aristotle*) offers to mankind a certain rule and pattern of living well and happily; disposing us to all civil offices of society. If we will believe *Tully*, it nourisheth

riseth and instructeth our youth ; delights our
 age, adorns our prosperity, comforts our adver-
 sity, entertains us at home, keeps us company
 abroad, travels with us, watches, divides the
 times of our earnest and sports ; shares in our
 country recesses and recreations ; infomuch as
 the wisest and best learned have thought her the
 absolute mistress of manners, and nearest of kin
 to virtue. And whereas they entitle *Philosophy*
 to be a rigid and austere *Poesy* : they have (on
 the contrary) styled *Poesy* a dulcet and gentle
Philosophy, which leads on, and guides us by
 the hand to action, with a ravishing delight,
 and incredible sweetness. But before we handle
 the kinds of *Poems*, with their special differ-
 ences ; or make court to the art itself, as a mis-
 tress, I would lead you to the knowledge of our
Poet, by a perfect information, what he is, or
 should be by Nature, by exercise, by imitation,
 by study ; and so bring him down through the
 disciplines of *Grammar*, *Logick*, *Rhetorick*, and
 the *Ethicks*, adding somewhat, out of all, pecu-
 liar to himself, and worthy of your admittance
 or reception.

First, we require in our *Poet*, or *maker*, (for
 that title our language affords him, elegantly,
 with the *Greek*) a goodness of natural wit. For,
 whereas all other arts consist of doctrine and
 precepts ; the *Poet* must be able, by Nature and
 Instinct, to pour out the treasure of his mind ;
 and,

and, as *Seneca* saith, *Aliquando secundum Anacreontem insanire jucundum esse*; by which he understands the *Poetical Rapture*. And, according to that of *Plato*; *Frustrà Poeticas fores sui compos pulsavit*: And of *Aristotle*; *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ fuit. Nec potest grande aliquid, & supra cæteros loqui, nisi mota mens*. Then it riseth higher, as by a divine instinct, when it contemns common, and known conceptions. It utters somewhat above a mortal mouth. Then it gets aloft, and flies away with his rider, whither, before, it was doubtful to ascend. This the *Poets* understood by their *Helicon*, *Pegasus*, or *Parnassus*, and this made *Ovid* to boast:

Est, Deus in nobis, agitante calefcimus illo:
Sedibus æthereis spiritus ille venit.

And *Lipsius*, to affirm; *Scio, Poetam neminem præstantem fuisse, sine parte quadam uberiore divinæ auræ*. And hence it is, that the coming up of good poets, (for I mind not *Mediocres*, or *Imos*) is so thin and rare among us; every beggarly corporation affords the state a *Mayor*, or two *Bailiffs*, yearly: but *solus Rex, aut Poeta, non quotannis nascitur*. To this perfection of Nature in our *Poet*, we require exercise of those parts, and frequent. If his wit will not arrive suddenly at the dignity of the antients, let him

not yet fall out with it, quarrel, or be over-hastily angry : offer to turn it away from study, in a humour ; but come to it again upon better cogitation ; try another time with labour. If then it succeed not, cast not away the quills yet : nor scratch the wainscot, beat not the poor desk ; but bring all to the forge and file again ; tourne it a-new. There is no *Statute-Law* of the kingdom bids you be a poet against your will ; or the first quarter. If it come in a year or two, it is well. The common rhymers pour forth verses, such as they are (*ex tempore*), but there never comes from them one sense, worth the life of a day. A *rhymers* and a *Poet* are two things. It is said of the incomparable *Virgil*, That he brought forth his verses like a bear, and after formed them with licking. *Scaliger*, the father, writes it of him, That he made a quantity of verses in the morning, which a-fore night he reduced to a less number. But that which *Valerius Maximus* hath left recorded of *Euripides*, the *Tragick Poet*, his answer to *Alcestis*, another *Poet*, is as memorable as modest : Who, when it was told to *Alcestis*, That *Euripides* had in three days brought forth but three verses, and those with some difficulty and throws ; *Alcestis*, glorying he could with ease have sent forth an hundred in the space ; *Euripides* roundly replied, “ Like
 “ enough : But here is the difference ; Thy verses
 “ will not last those three days ; mine will to all
 K “ time.”

“time.” Which was, as much as to tell him, he could not write a verse. I have met many of these rattles that made a noise, and buzzed. They had their hum, and no more. Indeed, things wrote with labour, deserve to be *so* read, and will last their age. The *third* requisite in our *Poet*, or maker, is *Imitation*, to be able to convert the substance, or riches of another *Poet*, to his own use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him till he grow very *He*; or so like him, as the copy may be mistaken for the principal. Not as a creature, that swallows what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but that feeds with an appetite, and hath a stomach to concoct, divide, and turn all into nourishment. Not to imitate fervilely, as *Horace* saith, and catch at vices for virtue: but to draw forth out of the best, and choicest flowers, with the bee, and turn all into honey, work it into one relish and favour: Make our *Imitation* sweet: observe, how the *best* writers have imitated, and follow *them*. How *Virgil* and *Statius* have imitated *Homer*: how *Horace*, *Archilochus*: how *Alcæus*, and the other *Lyrics*: and so of the rest. But that which we especially require in him, is an exactness of study, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man; not alone enabling him to know the *History*, or argument of a *Poem*, and to report it; but so to master the *matter*, and *style*, as to shew,

shew, he knows how to handle, place, or dispose
 of either, with *elegancy*, when need shall be.
 And not think, he can leap forth suddenly a
Poet, by dreaming he hath been in *Parnassus*, or
 having washed his lips (as they say) in *Helicon*.
 There goes more to his making, than so. For
 to *nature*, *exercise*, *imitation*, and *study*, *Art*
 must be added, to make all these perfect. And,
 though these challenge to themselves much, in
 the making up of our Maker, it is art only can
 lead him to perfection, and leave him there in
 possession, as planted by her hand. It is the
 assertion of *Tully*, If to an excellent nature, there
 happen an accession, or confirmation of learning
 and discipline, there will then remain somewhat
 noble and singular. For, as *Simylus* saith in
Stobæus, Οὐτε φύσις ἰκανὴ γίνεται τέχνης ἄτερ, ἔτε
 πάντων τέχνη μὴ φύσιν κεκτημένη; without art, Nature
 can never be perfect; and without Nature, art
 can claim no being. But, our poet must be-
 ware, that his study be not only to learn of
 himself; for he that shall affect to do that, con-
 fesseth his ever having a fool to his master. He
 must read many; but, ever the best, and
 choicest: those, that can teach him any thing,
 he must ever account his masters, and reverence:
 among whom *Horace*, and (he that taught him)
Aristotle, deserved to be the first in estimation.
Aristotle, was the first accurate *Critick*, and truest
 judge; nay, the greatest *Philosopher*, the world
 K 2 ever

ever had : for he noted the vices of all knowledges, in all creatures, and out of many mens perfections in a science, he formed still one art. So he taught us two offices together, how we ought to *judge* rightly of others, and what we ought to *imitate* specially in ourselves. But all this in vain, without a natural wit, and a poetical nature in chief. For, no man, so soon as he knows this, or reads it, shall be able to write the better ; but as he is adapted to it by Nature, he shall grow the perfecter writer. He must have *Civil Prudence*, and *Eloquence*, and that whole ; not taken up by snatches, or pieces, in sentences, or remnants, when he will handle business or carry counsels, as if he came then out of the declaimer's gallery, or shadow, furnished, but of the body of the state, which commonly is the school of men. The *Poet* is the nearest borderer upon the *orator*, and expresseth all his virtues, though he be tied more to numbers ; is his equal in ornament, and above him in his strengths. And (of the kind) the *Comick* comes nearest : because, in moving the minds of men, and stirring of affections (in which oratory shews, and especially approves her eminence) he chiefly excels. What figure of a body was *Lysippus* ever able to form with his graver, or *Apelles* to paint with his pencil, as the comedy to life expresseth so many, and various affections of the mind ? There shall the spectator see some insulting

sulting with joy ; others fretting with melancholy ; raging with anger ; mad with love ; boiling with avarice ; undone with riot ; tortured with expectation ; consumed with fear : no preturbation in common life but the orator finds an example of it in the scene. And then, for the elegancy of language, read but this inscription on the *Grave of a Comick Poet* :

*Immortales mortales, si fas esset, flere,
Flerent divæ Camænæ Nævium Poetam ;
Itaque postquam est Orcino traditus thesauro,
Obliti sunt Romæ linguâ loqui Latinâ.*

Or, that modest testimony given by *Lucius Ælius Stilo* upon *Plautus* ; who affirmed, *Musas, si Latine loqui voluissent, Plautino sermone fuisse loquuturas*. And that illustrious judgement by the most learned *M. Varro* of him ; who pronounced him the *Prince of Letters*, and *Elegancy*, in the *Roman* language.

I am not of that opinion to conclude a *Poet's* liberty within the narrow limits of laws, which either the *Grammarians*, or *Philosophers* prescribe. For, before they found out those laws, there were many excellent poets, that fulfilled them. Amongst whom none more perfect than *Sophocles*, who lived a little before *Aristotle*.

Which of the *Greeklings* durst ever give precepts to *Demosthenes*? or to *Pericles* (whom the age surnamed *heavenly*), because he seemed to thunder, and lighten, with his language? or to *Alcibiades*, who had rather Nature for his guide, than Art for his master?

But, whatsoever Nature at any time dictated to the most happy; or long exercise to the most laborious, that the wisdom, and learning of *Aristotle*, hath brought into an art: because, he understood the causes of things; and what other men did by chance or custom, he doth by reason; and not only found out the way not to err, but the short way we should take, not to err.

Many things in *Euripides* hath *Aristophanes* wittily reprehended; not out of *art*, but out of *truth*. For, *Euripides* is sometimes peccant, as he is most times perfect. But judgement when it is greatest, if reason doth not accompany it, is not ever absolute.

To judge of poets is only the faculty of poets; and not of all poets, but the best. *Nemo infelicius de Poetis judicavit, quàm qui de Poetis scripsit*. But, some will say, *Criticks* are a kind of tinkers, that make more faults than they mend ordinarily. See their diseases, and those of *Grammarians*. It is true, many bodies are the worse for the meddling with: And the multitude of *Physicians* hath destroyed many
found

found patients, with their wrong practice. But the office of a true *Critick*, or *Censor*, is, not to throw by a letter any where, or damn an innocent syllable, but lay the words together, and amend them; judge sincerely of the author, and his matter, which is the sign of solid, and perfect learning in a man. Such was *Horace*, an author of much civility; and (if any one among the heathen can be) the best master, both of virtue, and wisdom; an excellent, and true judge upon cause, and reason; not because he thought so; but because he knew so, out of use and experience.

Cato, the *Grammarian*, a defender of *Lucilius*.

*Cato Grammaticus, Latina Syren,
Qui solus legit, & facit Poetas.*

Quintilian of the same heresy, but rejected.

Horace his judgement of *Chærilus*, defended against *Joseph Scaliger*. And of *Laberius*, against *Julius*.

But chiefly his opinion of *Plautus*, vindicated against many, that are offended, and say, it is a hard censure upon the parent of all conceit, and sharpness. And, they wish it had not fallen from so great a master, and censor in the art:

whose bondmen knew better how to judge of *Plautus*, than any that dare patronize the family of learning in this age; who could not be ignorant of the judgement of the times, in which he lived, when *Poetry*, and the *Latin* language were at the height; especially, being a man so conversant, and inwardly familiar with the censures of great men, that did discourse of these things daily amongst themselves. Again, a man so gracious, and in high favour with the emperor; as *Augustus* often called him his witty *Manling*, (for the littleness of his stature;) and (if we may trust antiquity) had designed him for a secretary of estate; and invited him to the place, which he modestly prayed off, and refused.

Horace did so highly esteem *Terence* his comedies, as he ascribes the art in comedy to him alone, among the *Latins*, and joins him with *Menander*.

Now, let us see what may be said for either, to defend *Horace* his judgement to posterity; and not wholly to condemn *Plautus*.

The parts of a comedy are the same with a *Tragedy*, and the end is partly the same. For, they both delight, and teach; the *Comicks* are called διδάσκαλοι, of the *Greeks*; no less than the *Tragicks*.

Nor, is the moving of laughter always the end of *Comedy*, that is rather a fowling for the peoples' delight, or their fooling. For, as *Aristotle*

totle says rightly, the moving of laughter is a fault in comedy, a kind of turpitude, that depraves some part of a man's Nature without a disease. As a wry face without pain moves laughter, or a deformed vizard, or a rude clown, drest in a lady's habit, and using her actions, we dislike, and scorn such representations; which made the ancient philosophers ever think laughter unfitting in a wise man. And this induced *Plato* to esteem of *Homer*, as a sacrilegious person; because he presented the *Gods* sometimes laughing. As, also it is divinely said of *Aristotle*, that to seem ridiculous is a part of dishonesty, and foolish.

So that, what either in the words, or sense of an author, or in the language, or actions of men is awry, or depraved, doth strangely stir mean affections, and provoke for the most part to laughter. And therefore it was clear, that all insolent, and obscene speeches, jest upon the best men; injuries to particular persons; perverse, and sinister sayings (and the rather unexpected) in the old comedy, did move laughter; especially, where it did imitate any dishonesty; and scurrility came forth in the place of wit: which who understands the nature and *Genius* of laughter, cannot but perfectly know.

Of which *Aristophanes* affords an ample harvest, having not only out-gone *Plautus*, or any other in that kind; but expressed all the moods,
and

and figures of what is ridiculous, oddly. In short, as vinegar is not accounted good, until the wine be corrupted: so jests that are true and natural, seldom raise laughter, with the beast, the multitude. They love nothing that is right, and proper. The farther it runs from reason, or possibility with them, the better it is.

What could have made them laugh, like to see *Socrates* presented, that example of all good life, honesty, and virtue, to have him hoisted up with a pully, and there play the philosopher, in a basket: measure, how many foot a flea could skip *Geometrically*, by a just scale, and edify the people from the engine. This was *Theatrical* wit, right stage-jesting, and relishing a play-house, invented for scorn and laughter; whereas, if it had favoured of equity, truth, perspicuity, and candour, to have tasten a wise, or a learned palate, spit it out presently; "this is bitter and profitable, this instructs, and would inform us: what need we know any thing, that are nobly born, more than a horse-race, or a hunting-match, our day to break with citizens, and such innate mysteries?"

This is truly leaping from the stage, to the tumbrel again, reducing all wit to the original dung cart.

Of the magnitude, and compass of any Fable, Epick, or Dramatick.

To the resolving of this *Question*, we must first agree in the definition of the fable. The fable is called the *Imitation* of one *intire*, and *perfect* action; whose parts are so joined, and knit together, as nothing in the structure can be changed, or taken away, without impairing, or troubling the whole; of which there is a proportionable magnitude in the members. As for example; if a man would build a house, he would first appoint a *place* to build it in, which he would define within certain bounds: so in the constitution of a *Poem*, the *action* is aimed at by the *Poet*, which answers *place* in a building; and that action hath his largeness, compass, and proportion. But, as a court, or King's Bench palace requires other dimensions than a private house: so the *Epick* asks a magnitude, from other Poems. Since, what is place in the one, is action in the other, the difference is in space. So that by this definition we conclude the fable, to be the *imitation* of one perfect, and intire action; as one perfect, and intire place is required to a building. By perfect, we understand that, to which nothing is wanting; as *place* to the *building*, that is raised, and *action* to the *fable* that is formed. It is perfect, perhaps,

haps, not for a court, or King's palace, which requires a greater ground, but for the structure he would raise; so the space of the action, may not prove large enough for the *Epick Fable*, yet be perfect for the *Dramatick*, and WHOLE.

WHOLE, we call that, and PERFECT, which hath a *beginning*, a *midst*, and an *end*. So the place of any building may be whole, and intire, for that work; though too little for a palace. As, to a *Tragedy* or a *Comedy*, the action may be convenient, and perfect, that would not fit an *Epick Poem* in magnitude. So a *lyon* is a perfect creature in himself, though it be less, than that of a *Buffalo*, or a *Rhinocerote*. They differ but in *specie*: either in the *kind* is absolute. Both have their parts, and either the whole. Therefore, as in every *body*, so in every *action*, which is the subject of a just work, there is required a certain proportionable greatness, neither too vast, nor too minute. For that which happens to the eyes, when we behold a body, the same happens to the memory, when we contemplate an action. I look upon a monstrous giant, as *Tityus*, whose body covered nine acres of land, and mine eye sticks upon every part: the whole that consists of those parts, will never be taken in at one intire view. So in a *Fable*, if the action be too *great*, we can never comprehend the whole together in our imagination. Again, if it be too *little*, there ariseth no pleasure

sure out of the object, it affords the view no stay : it is beheld and vanisheth at once. As if we should look upon an ant or pismire, the parts fly the sight, and the whole considered is almost nothing. The same happens in action, which is the object of memory, as the body is of sight. Too vast oppresseth the eyes, and exceeds the memory : too little scarce admits either.

Now in every action it behoves the *Poet* to know which is the utmost bound, how far with fitness, and a necessary proportion, he may produce, and determine it. That is, till either good fortune change into the worse, or the worse into the better. For as a body without proportion cannot be goodly, no more can the action, either in comedy, or tragedy, without it's fit bounds. And every bound for the nature of the subject, is esteemed the best that is largest, till it can increase no more : so it behoves the action in *Tragedy*, or *Comedy*, to be let grow, till the necessity ask a conclusion : wherein two things are to be considered ; first, that it exceed not the compass of one day : next, that there be place left for digression, and art. For the *Episodes*, and digressions in a fable, are the same that household-stuff, and other furniture are in a house. And so far for the measure, and extent of a *Fable Dramatick*.

Now, that it should be *one*, and intire. *One* is considerable two ways : either, as it is only
 I separate,

separate, and by itself: or as being composed of many parts, it begins to be one, as those parts grow, or are wrought together. That it should be *one* the first way alone, and by itself, no man that hath tasted letters ever would say, especially having required before a just magnitude, and equal proportion of the parts in themselves. Neither of which can possibly be, if the action be single and separate, not composed of parts, which laid together in themselves, with an equal and fitting proportion, tend to the same end: which thing out of antiquity itself, hath deceived many; and more this day it doth deceive.

So many there be of old, that have thought the action of one man to be one: as of *Hercules*, *Theseus*, *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and other *Heroes*; which is both foolish and false; since by one and the same person many things may be severally done, which cannot fitly be referred, or joined, to the same end: which not only the excellent *Tragick Poets*, but the best masters of the *Epick*, *Homer*, and *Virgil* saw. For though the argument of an *Epick-Poem* be far more diffused, and poured out, than that of *Tragedy*; yet *Virgil*, writing of *Aeneas*, hath pretermitted many things. He neither tells how he was born, how brought up; how he fought with *Achilles*; how he was snatched out of the battle by *Venus*; but that one thing, how *he came into Italy*, he prosecutes

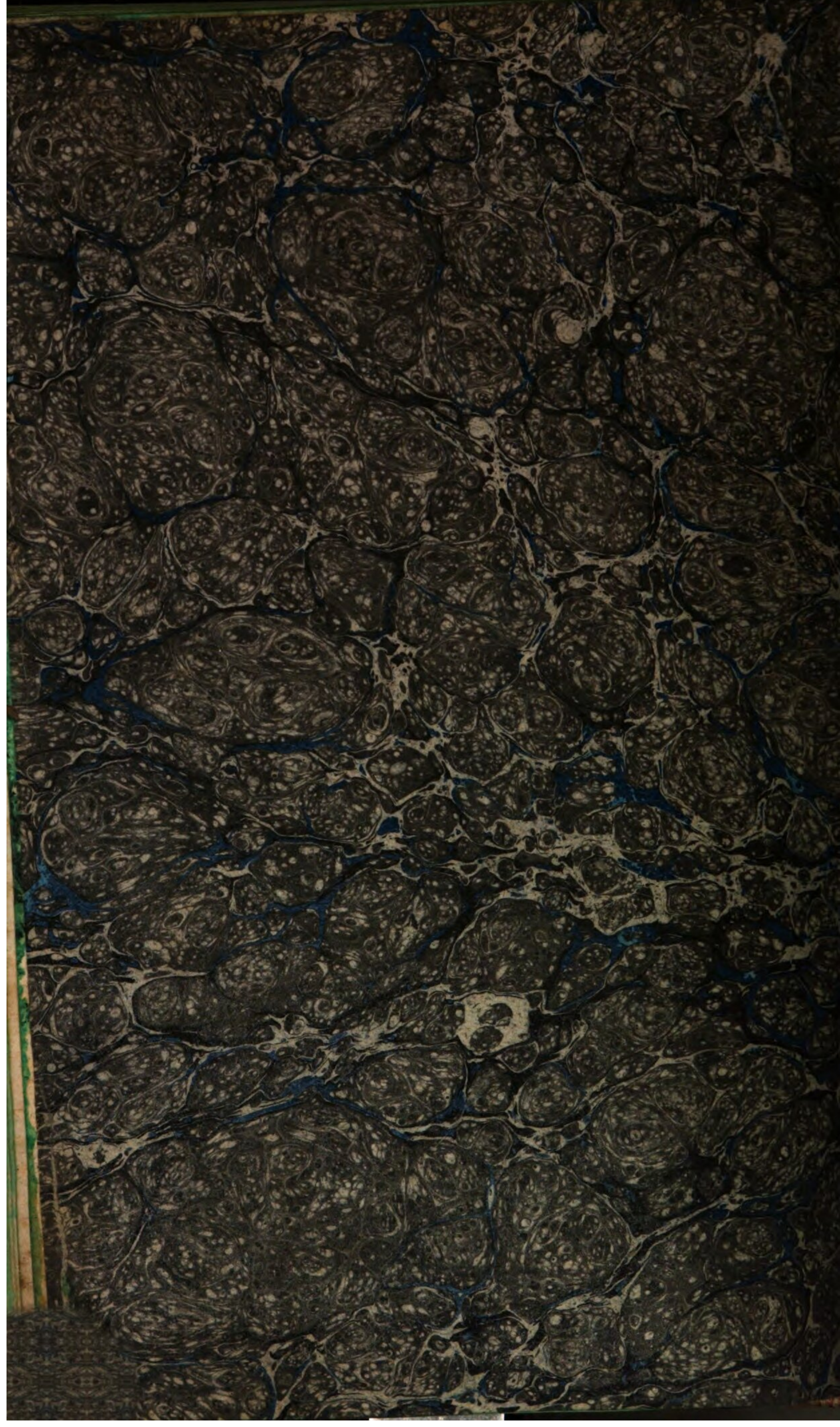
cutes in twelve books. The rest of his journey, his error by sea, the sack of *Troy*, are put not as the argument of the work, but *Episodes* of the argument. So *Homer* laid by many things of *Ulysses*, and handled no more than he saw tended to one and the same end.

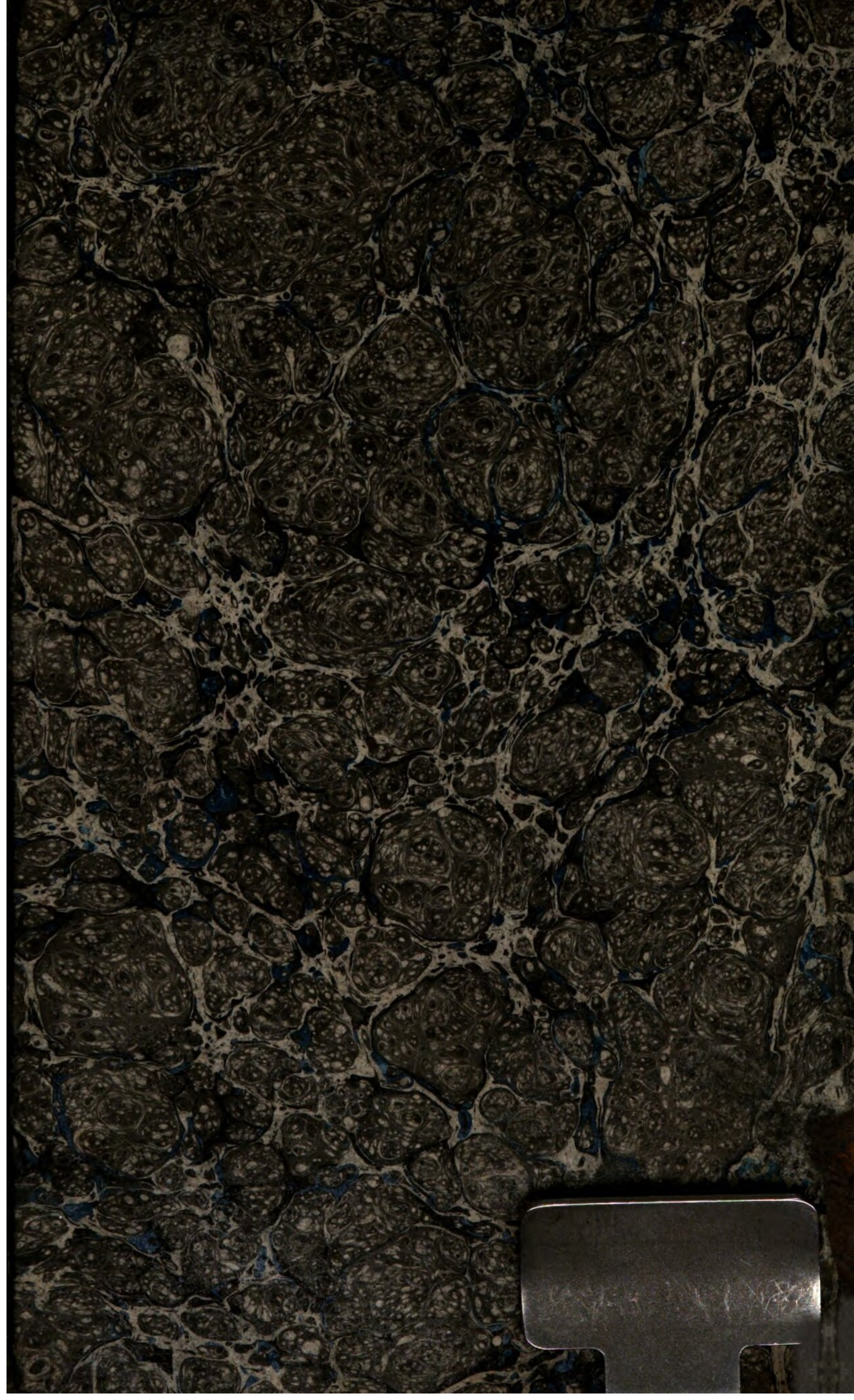
Contrary to which and foolishly these *Poets* did, whom the *Philosopher* taxeth; of whom one gathered all the actions of *Theseus*: another put all the labours of *Hercules* in one work. So did he, whom *Juvenal* mentions in the beginning, *hoarse Codrus*, that recited a volume compiled, which he called his *Theseide*, not yet finished, to the great trouble both of his hearers and himself: amongst which there were many parts had no coherence, nor kindred one with another, so far they were from being one action, one *Fable*. For as a house, consisting of divers materials, becomes one structure, and one dwelling; so an action, composed of divers parts, may become one *Fable*, *Epick*, or *Dramatick*. For example, in a *Tragedy*, look upon *Sophocles* his *Ajax*: *Ajax* deprived of *Achilles's* armour, which he hoped from the suffrage of the *Greeks*, disdains; and, growing impatient of the injury, rageth, and turns mad. In that humour he doth many senseless things; and at last falls upon the *Grecian* flock, and kills a great ram for *Ulysses*: returning to his senses, he grows ashamed of the
scorn,

scorn, and kills himself; and is by the *Chiefs* of the *Greeks* forbidden burial. These things agree, and hang together, not as they were *done*; but as *seeming to be done*, which made the action *whole, intire, and absolute*.

For the *whole*, as it consisteth of parts; so without all the parts it is not the *whole*; and to make it *absolute*, is required, not only the parts, but such parts as are *true*. For a part of the whole was true; which if you take away, you either change the whole, or it is not the whole. For if it be such a part, as being present or absent, nothing concerns the whole, it cannot be called a part of the whole: and such are the *Episodes*, of which hereafter. For the present, here is one example; the single combat of *Ajax* with *Hector*, as it is at large described in *Homer*, nothing belongs to this *Ajax* of *Sophocles*.

F I N I S.





Sidney, Philip,

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